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SERIES OF BRIEF

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

BY

M. S. ROYCE,

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PREFACE.

The greater part of this tract was originally prepared as a series of Lectures for the benefit of the writer's own congregation, and was delivered in that form several years ago. He has hoped to see a short and lucid statement of the prominent points in the History of the Church of England given to the public, by some one abler and better informed than himself; but having waited some time in vain, his conviction of the importance of the subjects herein discussed, and the advice of judicious friends, have induced him to publish these pages. He hopes they may be found useful to communicants of the Church who may not have time nor opportunity to examine larger works; and he sincerely trusts that they may be read by others also who are willing to follow truth, when they are satisfied that it is truth, even though it should cross their prejudices, or lead them to conclusions directly contrary to those which they had previously held.

The Author is indebted to the kind assistance of his friend, the Rev. C. T. Quintard, Rector of the Church of the Advent, Nashville, for many of the notes found in theso pages, and for many references to authorities which he could not otherwise have obtained except at the expense of much time and labor.

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CHAPTER I.

The Church of Christ must have a History.—Advantages of knowing that history.— The Church the same in all ages. Organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church.—The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States one with the Church of England in doctrine and fellowship.—Origin of the Church of England.—Founded in the days of the Apostles, or very near them.—St. Paul probably the founder.—Origin of the British Councils and establishment of Schools of Theology.—Relapse into Paganism, and return to Christianity.—Labors of Augustine.—Refusal of the British Christians to submit to him.—The usurpation of the Bishop of Rome gradual.

THE Church which Christ founded, and which the Apostles more completely established, was, from its first beginning, an organized body of believers; it was an association of living men and women, bound by solemn obligations not only to believe and to suffer but also to *act;* it was a Church Militant, and "conquer or die" was one of the laws of its existence. Of course the Church must have a History; it did not die, but it conquered and lived, and the record of its conquests is its history. A

knowledge of this history must be useful to every member of Christ's Church; for, as we read the record of the days when the Church increased and prospered, we may learn the causes which will make it increase and prosper now; when we trace its corruption and decline, we are admonished to avoid those errors in doctrine and practice which would cause its decline now; as we learn what was the belief of the Church in its best and purest days, we perceive the advantages of holding to sound doctrine and strict discipline; and as we trace the close connexion between corruption in manners and errors in doctrine, we see the necessity of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. Indeed we can hardly have that certainty that we are holding to the true doctrines of the Christian religion, which every Christian ought to possess, unless we know something of the various heresies which have been denounced and exposed by the Church in past ages, and have learned when and how the faith which the Apostles believed and taught has overcome all that opposed it and become firmly established as the undisputed and indisputable truth of God.

It behooves Christians in this age and country to inform themselves in regard to Church History for another reason. We find ourselves everywhere surrounded by an array of rival societies, all more or less opposed to each other — varying in belief, differing in organization — and yet each one claiming to be the true Church which Christ founded, and nearer to the Apostolic model than any of its rivals. Each Christian must decide upon the claims of these opposing denominations before he unites with either of them, or he must without reflection and guided solely by prejudice or whim, determine to cast in his lot with some *one* of them for better or for worse. If he be a man of reflection, and desirous to arrive at the *truth* in regard to the claims of these various denominations, what plan more simple or more satisfactory than to commence his inquiry by asking "Where and when did this or that denomination come into existence?" What light does History throw on its claim of being a branch of the Church which Christ founded? Did Christ and his Apostles organize it, or was it the offspring of later days and the work of uninspired men?

The main object of this tract is to furnish

the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country with such an amount of *certain* historical information as may satisfy them that the Church to which they belong has been in existence as an *organized*, *visible*, *living*, and *acting* body of professed Christians, from the days of the Apostles down to the present time; that it has always held, taught and practised the fundamental articles of Christian faith and morals as laid down in the Gospel, and that it has never materially altered the organized form which the Apostles gave to it; in a word, that the Church of which we are members to-day, is *identical* with the one which the Apostles planted; that it is as truly the *same* church as the babe, the youth, the mature man and the grey-headed grandsire are only different ages and developments of *one and the same individual.*

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States has been in existence as a separate and independent organization only from the time of the American Revolution; but it was not organized as a *new* Church at that time—very far from it. Its members had all been, previously to its separate organization,

members of the Church of England; its ministers had all been ordained by Bishops of the English Church; its doctrines and worship were those of the Church of England, and it was in all respects part and parcel of that Church, though greatly neglected, and laboring under many disadvantages.

Very shortly after the Revolution, in the year 1785, and again in 1786, the representatives of the Churches in the several states assembled in Convention, addressed an earnest and respectful memorial to the Archbishops of the Church of England, representing the difficulties and disadvantages under which the Churches in the United States were placed by the political changes that had been effected, and requesting them to consecrate Bishops for this country, so as to complete our organization as an independent branch of the Church. In this memorial they stated that the Church in this country did not propose to depart from the principles of the Church of England, nor to separate from the communion of that Church, nor to make any alterations in the doctrines, worship or organization of the Church, except such as were necessary to

accommodate it to the different circumstances in which it had been placed by the political changes of the Revolution.* After some delay (the principal object of which was to give

* The object of the Petition which was addressed to the Most Rev. and Rt. Rev. the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishops of the Church of England is thus stated in the Preamble —"When it pleased the Supreme Ruler of the universe that this part of the British empire should be free, sovereign and independent, it became the most important concern of the members of our communion to provide for its continuance: And while in accomplishing this they kept in view that wise and liberal part of the system of the Church of England which excludes as well the claiming as the acknowledging of such spiritual subjection as may be inconsistent with the civil duties of her children, it was nevertheless their earnest desire and resolution to retain the venerable form of Episcopal Government, handed down to them, as they conceived, from the time of the Apostles, and endeared to them by the remembrance of the holy Bishops of the primitive Church, of the blessed Martyrs who reformed the doctrine and worship of the Church of England, and of the many great and pious prelates who have adorned that Church in every succeeding age. But however general the desire of completing the orders of our Ministry, so diffused and unconnected were the members of our communion over this extensive country that much time and negotiation were necessary for the forming a representative body of the greater number of the Episcopalians in these States; and owing to the same causes, it was not until this Convention, that sufficient powers could be procured for the addressing your Lordships on this subject."—*Journal of Convention of* 1785 *in Church Review, Vol. XI.* p. 655.

In 1786 the Convention says—"We are unanimous and explicit in assuring your Lordships that we neither have departed nor propose to depart from the doctrines of your

the English Bishops the fullest proof that we did not intend to depart from the doctrines or communion of the Church of England,) a sufficient number of Bishops were consecrated for the United States, and the Church in this country was completely organized according to the principles which it had held all along, and took the name of "the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." Since its separate organization there has always been the most friendly feeling between the English and the American Churches; the Clergy of the American Church are invited to officiate in English Churches and English Clergymen can and do hold parishes in the United States.* In the plainest and most emphatic manner, both in public acts and in private intercourse, each Church has affirmed and does continually affirm that they stand to each other

Church. We have retained the same discipline and forms of worship as far as was consistent with our civil constitutions;" * * * *, *Journal of Convention* 1786 — *Church Review, Vol. XII.* p. 148.

*Since 1850, Bishops of the Church of England have been present at and assisted in the consecration of *four* Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal church, viz: Bishops Horatio Potter, Atkinson, Davis, and Wainwright.

in the exact position of *Mother* and *Daughter*—not as *rivals*, for their aims are the same—not as *opponents*, for they hold common principles —not as *separatists*, for they are one Family, one Communion, one as being each alike a Branch of Christ's living Vine, the Holy Catholic Church.*

Having now shown that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States is really *one* with the Church of England, we are prepared for the next step in our historical investigation, which is, to inquire *when* did the *Church of England originate* and *by whom was it organized.*

The Church existed in England and was recognized as the National Church when this country was first settled, for the Puritans came to New England to avoid conforming to its requirements. It existed in the time of Queen

*In October, 1853, a delegation from the venerable "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," composed of one Bishop and three Presbyters, attended the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the meeting of the Board of Missions held at the same time,—returning the courtesy shown by members of our House of Bishops in attending the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Society celebrated in London.

Elizabeth, for under her the use of the present Prayer Book was fully established. It existed in the time of Henry the Eighth, for he assisted to throw off the authority of the Pope. It existed *before* Henry the Eighth, or there would have been nothing for the Pope to lord it over. It existed in the days of William the Conqueror, or there would have been no Bishoprics for him to fill with foreign ecclesiastics. It existed in the year 596, for in that year Pope Gregory sent Augustine with forty monks to convert the Saxons, and when he came he found Bishops and Clergy and Churches among the Britons, who would not own his authority nor submit to his rule.

The first fact which we shall regard as a *settled* and *certain matter of history* is this, that a *Church*, protected by royal authority and statute law, known as *the Church of England*, has been in existence for *twelve hundred years at least*. This point will not be argued; if any one doubts or disputes it, let him turn to any history of England, and, opening to any period during the past twelve hundred years, see how far he can read without coming to some notice of the *Church* or of Churchmen.

Having established one *fact*, that the Church of England has existed at least *four times as long* as any denomination that dates its existence from the period of the Reformation, we shall now try to point out as nearly as possible the *exact time* when it did come into existence.

The strong *probabilities* are that the Church was organized in Britain in the time of the *Apostles*, and by *that one* of them (St. Paul) who says of himself "I suppose that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles." The reasons which go to support the probability of St. Paul's having been the founder of the British Church are—first, Clement of Rome (the fellow laborer and friend of St. Paul), writing to the Corinthians, says, "Paul, being a Herald (of the Cross) in the East and in the West, preached righteousness through the whole world, and went to the *utmost bounds of the West.*" Now if Clement had said "went to *Britain*," we should not have said that it was *probable* that St. Paul founded the British Church, but should have stated it as a *certain fact.* The reader will soon see how very little this probability falls short of being a certainty. The expression

which Clement does use is in reality equivalent to saying that St. Paul went to Britain; for, "the utmost bounds of the West" was a term frequently used by writers of that period to designate Britain.* "If these words are to be taken in their literal sense," says Bishop Short, "little doubt can remain that this kingdom was converted to Christianity by the Apostle to the Gentiles."† When it is remembered that this is the statement of one whom St. Paul himself speaks of (Philippians 4:3) as one of his "*fellow laborers*, whose names are in the Book of Life," and who, from personal intercourse with the Apostle, must have known in what countries he had preached, we perceive that there is but a *shade of difference* in this case between *probability* and *absolute certainty*. This statement of Clement is con-

* "Fuisti in ultima Occidentis insula"—Thou hast been in the last island of the West.—*Catullus.*

St. Jerome says that St. Paul imitated the Sun of Righteousness in going from one ocean to the other. "Ut Evangelium Christi in Occidentis quoque partibus prædicaret"—that he might preach the Gospel of Christ also in the parts of the West. Stillingfleet (Antiquities of the British Church, p. 38) produces many other authorities to show that Britain was esteemed the extreme West.

† Short's History, p. 2.

firmed by Eusebius, the historian of the early Church, who flourished about A. D. 325. He says that the Apostles preached in all the world, some going to India and some to the *British Isles.* It is also confirmed by Theodoret, who says, "Our fishermen and publicans, and the tent-maker (Paul) carried the evangelical laws to all men, and persuaded not only Romans, and those tributary to them, but also Scythians and the Huns, besides the Indians, *Britons* and Germans, and, in a word, every nation and tribe of men to receive the laws of the Crucified One." From these testimonies we are justified in saying that there is the *very strongest probability* that some of the Apostles, of whom St. Paul was one, preached the Gospel in Britain and established the Church there.

But we have now only to take a single step, and, leaving all probabilities behind us, place our feet on the firm ground of *certain history.* Whoever planted the Church in Britain, it is certain that by the end of the second century it was firmly established there; for, about the year 200, Tertullian thus speaks of it—"All Spain, and the different nations of Gaul, and the parts of *Britain* that are inaccessible to

the Romans are brought into subjection to Christ." In the year 240 the same statement is made in two different passages by Origen, one of which reads thus — "When did the land of *Britain* agree in the worship of one God before the coming of Christ? When did the land of the Moors agree? When did all the world thus agree? But now, by means of the Churches, which occupy the very outposts of the world, the universal earth cries out with joy to the Lord of Israel." In the third century, Britain not only had Churches, but she had Martyrs also. St. Alban was the first martyr to the faith in Britain,* and history has preserved the names of others who suffered during the Diocletian persecution,

* When persecution began St. Alban was a Pagan, but his humanity would not allow him to refuse an asylum under his roof to a proscribed Christian priest. While hospitably sheltered there the pious clergyman's religious fervor so effectually won Alban's veneration that he readily received instruction in the faith of Jesus. He resided at Verulam, afterwards named St. Alban's. The place of his martyrdom was the hill overlooking the spot then occupied by that ancient city. Here in after times arose the noble abbey of St. Alban's, a worthy commemoration of Britain's earliest blood-stained testimony against heathen errors. After Alban's example many other members of the ancient British Church surrendered their lives rather than deny their Saviour. — *Hom. in Pass. S. Alban.* — *Wheloc. in Bed.*, p. 36.

which extended to all parts of the Roman Empire. In the year 307, Constantine the Great, who was then commander of the Roman army in Britain, was proclaimed Emperor of Rome, and on ascending the throne protected the Church by becoming a Christian himself and by putting an end to persecution.

The various heresies that arose at an early period required to be examined and condemned by the faithful, and for this purpose many *Councils* of Bishops and other Ecclesiastical Authorities were convened. The records of these councils give additional proof of the existence of the Church in the British Isles. In the year 314 the Council of Arles was called by Constantine, among the members of which we find *three* British Bishops. At the famous Council of Nice, A. D. 325, bishops from Britain are supposed to have been present; but at the Council of Sardica, A. D. 347, and of Ariminum, A. D. 450, their presence is clearly established. At this latter council most of the British Bishops refused to receive the allowance made to them for their expenses by the emperor, only three of them accepting it, which is a proof both of the number and the wealth of the

British bishops who were there. The earliest of the British councils was that of Verulam in the year 446; which was convened by Germanus and Lupus, bishops from Gaul, who were invited by the British divines to aid them in opposing the Pelagian heresy, which had made considerable progress in Britain. As the best means of putting an effectual stop to these heresies, Germanus and his assistants established schools of theology, which became very famous for producing learned theologians; so much so that Bede, who was not favorable to the British church, confesses that it was well furnished with learned men at the coming of Augustine to England in 596. These same Bishops, Germanus and Lupus, are said to have brought with them into the British churches the use of the Gallican liturgy, which was derived probably from St. John through Polycarp and Irenæus. The principal differences between this and the Roman liturgy, were followed by our Reformers, when they purified the Prayer Book from Romish corruptions, in the time of Edward VI.

From these historical notices of the British Church, which have been given, and from others

which are confirmatory of these, we are led to the conclusion that the British Isles were very thoroughly converted to Christianity by the middle of the fifth century — that their faith was pure, that their churches were numerous and well endowed, and that their clergy were equal in point of learning and zeal to those of the neighboring countries. We also have abundant evidence upon two points which are of great interest to us of the present day. One point is that the early British Church was beyond question *Episcopal* in its organization, i. e., it was governed by *Bishops* and had three orders of ministers; it also used a *written Liturgy* and not extempore prayers. The other point is, that it was not subject to the authority of the Roman Church, nor recognized the Pope as being superior in authority to their own Bishops. It was as independent of foreign jurisdiction as the Protestant Episcopal Church is at this day.

But very shortly after the year 450 the bright prospects of the British church were darkened by the political convulsions then rapidly approaching, and a fearful storm burst on both Church and State. The Roman Empire, becoming

weakened by internal commotions, and not being able to defend all its conquered provinces, withdrew its armies from Britain, and left the country exposed to the attacks of its barbarous neighbors, against whom the Britons were not able to protect themselves. The consequence was that the Saxons, who were then a heathen nation, invaded Britain, and after a struggle of about a hundred years, succeeded in driving the Britons into the mountainous districts, particularly into that portion now called Wales, and in reducing the remainder to a state of servitude. By this Saxon invasion, the country which had been almost entirely Christian under the rule of the Romans, was carried back into Paganism, its churches destroyed and their members scattered and oppressed, except in Wales, where the Britons still maintained their independence both political and religious. It was not long however before the Saxons themselves began to grow weary of their Paganism and disposed to accept the Christianity which they had been the means of overthrowing in Britain. By the marriage of Ethelbert, one of their kings, with Bertha, a Christian lady, the Christian religion and its teachings became

known to those in authority, and through her influence doubtless they became more indulgent toward the oppressed remnants of the British Church.* Influenced probably by what

*Bertha was a daughter of Cherebert, King of the Franks. Her family did not allow her to pass over into Britain until ample stipulations had been made for the free profession of her holy faith. She was attended by Luidhard, Bishop of Soissons in France, and for her accommodation a *British* Church (*St. Martin's*, situated on the eastern side of Canterbury), which had been long desecrated by the Saxons, was again rendered suitable for Christian worship. The following interesting account of St. Martin's Church is taken from a rare and valuable work, "The History of the Antient and Metropolitical City of Canterbury, civil and ecclesiastical, by Edward Hasted, F. R. S. & S. A., Canterbury, 1799," pp. 102 and 103.

"St. Martin's Church is situated in the eastern extremity of the suburb of its own name, standing on the side of the hill, a little distance from the high road leading to Deal and Sandwich, and within the city's liberty. This Church seems indeed very antient, being built, the chancel especially, which appears to be of the workmanship of the time, mostly of *Roman* or *British bricks;* the noted reliques and tokens of old age in any kind of building, whether sacred or profane. It consists at present of a nave or body and a chancel, having a square tower at the west end of it, in which hang three bells. The chancel appears to have been the whole of the original building of this church, or oratory, and was probably built about the year A. D. 200! — that is, about the middle space of time when the Christians, both Britons and Romans, lived in this island free from all persecutions. The walls of this chancel are built almost wholly of British or Roman bricks, laid and placed in a regular state in like manner as is observed in other buildings of the Romans in this island, of which those in Dover castle are an instance. This church, so much celebrated

he had learned of the favorable disposition of the Saxons toward Christianity, Pope Gregory, in the year 596, sent Augustine, with forty monks, to attempt their conversion. Augustine and his companions were received with great favor, being permitted to settle at Canterbury, and allowed to teach and preach as much as they pleased. The success of these missionaries was very great; many of the Saxons became Christians, among whom were the King and nobles, and in a short time after his arrival Augustine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury and more clergy were sent to his assistance. By the efforts of Augustine and his successors all the Saxons were in comparatively a short time converted to Christianity, and

for the great antiquity of it, is supposed by some to have been the resort of St. Augustine and his fellow laborers at their first arrival; and by license of King Ethelbert, granted to them in favor of Queen Bertha his wife, who had this church, [which was] built long before, as Bede says by the believing Romans and dedicated to St. Martin, allotted for the place of her public devotions. Others suppose that the chapel where St. Augustine first celebrated masse was that of St. Pancrace within the precincts of the adjoining monastery. However this may be, it is in general admitted that this church, having been in early times a *Christian* oratory, made use of by the believing Romans, was repaired and re-consecrated by Luidhard, Bishop of Soissons (who had attended Queen Bertha from France when she married King Ethelbert), and was dedicated to St. Martin."

churches composed of the Saxon converts, were again organized throughout the whole land. Before Augustine's death, which took place in the year 605, he made an effort to unite the Saxon churches which he had founded with the British churches which were in existence when he came to England, but this effort proved unsuccessful at that time. Having invited the British divines to a conference, he addressed them as follows — "In many things ye act contrary to our customs, and to those of the universal church; yet if in these three respects ye will obey me — to celebrate Easter at the proper time; to perform the rite of baptism, by which we are born again unto God, according to the custom of the holy Roman and Apostolic Church; and to join with us in preaching to the English nation the Word of the Lord; all the other things which ye do, although contrary to our customs, we will bear with equanimity." To this demand the British Bishops replied, "that they would consent to none of these things, nor would they acknowledge Augustine as their archbishop." The British divines seem to have based their refusal to conform to the Roman customs in regard to the

time of keeping Easter and the ceremonies in Baptism, on the ground that *their* customs were as ancient and entitled to as much regard as those which Augustine followed. And they did not wish to submit to his dictation, when they had Bishops of their own. The reply of Dinooth, Abbot of Bangor, to Augustine, is very plain upon this point. He says—"Be it known to you, and without doubt, that we are all of us obedient and subject to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, *and to every true and godly Christian;* to love every one in his degree with perfect charity; and other obedience than this I do not know to be due to him whom ye call the Pope, nor that he is the 'Father of Fathers;' and *this* obedience we are willing to render to him and to *every* Christian continually. Besides, we are under the government of the Bishop of Caerlaon upon Usk; who is, under God, appointed to superintend us, to cause us to continue in the spiritual way." Augustine's other proposal, that they should preach to the Saxons, was a very reasonable and Christian-like request; the British divines were guilty of stubbornness and want of charity in refusing to accede to it;

but in extenuation it must be remembered that the Saxons had oppressed and persecuted them and taken away most of their civil and religious privileges, so that it was natural for them to have much bitterness of feeling still remaining toward them. In the course of time this unkind temper wore off, and by intermarriage and that constant intercourse which always takes place between the conquerors and the conquered, the Saxon and Briton became finally blended into one nation and likewise into one and the same Church.

The first effort to bring the British Churches under the control of the Roman Church, was met by a prompt and somewhat stubborn refusal to submit to any foreign interference, which shows most conclusively that the English Church, since its foundation, had not been under the control of the Pope, nor in any manner subject to his authority. As we proceed with the history we shall find that the Bishop of Rome continued from the time of Augustine down to the Reformation to thrust his authority upon the English Church, and that he finally succeeded. But it should not be forgotten that, if the Roman Church had no right and exer-

cised no control over the English Church for the *first five hundred years* of its existence, the power which the Pope afterward gained in England was usurped and unlawful. Having been planted by Apostolic hands, it was a complete Church as much as the Church at Rome was when St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, or when he preached to them "at his own hired house." There is no historical evidence that the Bishop of Rome possessed any authority out of his own province for a considerable period; and the means by which he afterward rose to the height of universal empire over things temporal and spiritual will be seen as we progress. We, who claim the Church of England as our spiritual mother, may well be thankful that amid the fires of persecution and the ravages of barbarian invaders, the Providence of God has preserved to us a few plain memorials of the Church of our fathers as it was in the days of its virgin purity, as it was in the days of Apostles and Martyrs. We perceive that it was then under the care of its own Bishops, and having the same outward organization that it has now; we learn from the decisions of Councils where

British Bishops were present, that they held to the same simple and orthodox creeds which we read in every service now ; and we may count it our peculiar glory that we stand now where our fathers stood eighteen hundred years ago,— "on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,"—holding neither more nor less than the faith which they taught, and united in the communion which they established. May we thus remain forever

CHAPTER II.

The National Churches of Apostolic and primitive times. — The Faith, Government and Ministry the same everywhere. — Only one Bishop to every large city, but many presbyters and deacons. — All Bishops equal in authority and rank. — Provincial and National Churches. — Metropolitans. — Each National Church perfect in itself. — National Churches at present in existence. — Churches of Spain, France, Rome, England. — Rise, fall, and restoration of the English Church. — Who shall cast a stone at her?

HAVING traced the history of the English Church for five centuries, showing that in all that time it was independent of the Church of Rome and of all other churches; showing also how about the year 600 the first step was taken towards a connexion with the Roman Church by the mission of Augustine to convert the Saxons, it now becomes necessary, in order to understand the relative position of the English and Roman Churches from the year 600 till the Reformation, that we should go back a little and inquire into the relations that existed in the earliest ages between the various churches that were founded by the Apostles. The principal churches spoken of in the New Tes-

tament are Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth and Philippi; in the next century we find, besides these, Alexandria and Carthage distinguished as prominent churches. By the third century we find that these leading churches had become, as it were, the centres of ecclesiastical authority, and the Bishops of smaller churches assembled at the larger and more influential one whenever there were cases of discipline requiring their attention; when heresies made it necessary to define the faith of the Church; or when it was needful to frame rules for its government. Thus, in a very natural manner, the Church Catholic or Universal became subdivided into different districts, each governed by its own laws in minor matters, but all holding the same faith,*

*The Martyr Irenæus, the friend of Polycarp who was St. John's disciple, thus illustrates the unity of the Church in matters of faith:

"The Church, though disseminated throughout the whole world, even unto the ends of the earth, hath received of the Apostles the belief in One God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth and the seas and all that in them is; and in One Christ Jesus the Son of God, who was made man for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets announced the dispensations [of God], the Advent of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, his birth of a Virgin, his suffering, resurrection from the dead, and bodily ascension into heaven, and his coming [again] from

having the same form of government, taught by the same ministry, and having such perfect harmony and agreement that he who was a member of the Church in one place was received as a member of the Church in any country however remote; and he who was a minister of the Church in one country was permitted to exercise the office of the ministry wherever he might go. The *Faith* of the Church at that time is set forth in the two creeds which we use in the daily service, and which were declared to be the substance of

the heavens in the glory of the Father, to gather together all things in one, to raise up all flesh of mankind, in order that, ascending to the invisible Father's will, every knee, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, was to bow to Christ Jesus, our Lord, our God, our Saviour, and our King, and every tongue confess unto him, and that he may exercise righteous judgment on all, may send spiritual wickedness, and the angels that transgressed and became apostate, and the impious, unrighteous, wicked and blasphemous among men, into eternal fire; and bestow life and immortality and eternal glory on the righteous, the pious, and those who observe his commandments and continue in his love either from the beginning or from the time of their repentance. This preaching, and this faith, (as we have said), the Church, though disseminated throughout the whole world, guards as carefully as if she dwelt in every house; believes as if she had but one soul; and proclaims, teaches and delivers, as if she possessed but one mouth."—*See Palmer's Eccles. Hist.* p. 11.

The attentive reader will notice how closely this statement resembles the Nicene Creed.

what the Apostles taught, and what the whole Church believed, at two General Councils,—one held in Nice in the year 325 and the other in Constantinople in 381. At these two famous Councils a large number of Bishops and clergy were assembled from all parts of the Christian world, and that fact alone shows that there was a perfect unity among all the churches.* At the time of these two Councils, when the *faith* of the whole Church was the same, the *government* of the Church and the orders of the ministry were what are now called Episcopal, that is, there were three orders or grades of the ministry, namely, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The duties which these ministers per-

* Origen, who wrote before the Council of Nice was assembled, says, "The faith was the same in all the world, men professed it with one heart and one soul; for though there were different dialects in the world, yet the power of the faith was one and the same. The churches in Germany had no other faith and tradition than those in Iberia, or Spain or those among the Celts, or in the East or in Egypt, or in Libya, or in the middle parts of the world" (by which he means Jerusalem and the adjacent churches). But as one and the same sun enlightened all the world, so the preaching of this truth shined all over and enlightened all that were willing to come to the knowledge of the truth. Nor did the most eloquent ruler of the Church say any more than this (for no one was above his Master), nor the weakest diminish anything from this tradition. For THE FAITH being one and the same, he that said most of it could not enlarge it, nor he that said least take anything from it."

formed were as follows: *Deacons* baptized, assisted in administering the Communion, distributed alms to the poor, visited the sick, and preached the Gospel. *Priests* (also called Elders and Presbyters) performed the usual duties of a Parish minister at the present day, preaching, administering the Sacraments, and having the general oversight of their particular churches. *Bishops* discharged any of the duties of the two lower orders, and in addition to these duties were entrusted with the power of ordaining ministers, with authority to direct the Priests and Deacons in the discharge of their duties, with the power to try ministers who had been guilty of heresy or misconduct, to degrade them from their office or to excommunicate them if found guilty, and, in general, they had the oversight of both clergy and laity within the district committed to their care. In the city of Rome, for instance, there were many churches or congregations, as the Christians there were very numerous; to each congregation there was a Presbyter and a Deacon (sometimes *several* of each order), but in the whole city there was but *one* Bishop, who had the general oversight

and government of all the clergy and all the churches in and around the city. So also in the country there were Bishops who had the oversight of the churches and clergy within a given district. The Dioceses were much smaller in those days than are those of our present Bishops, being usually about the size of a modern county. The country was thickly settled and Christians were numerous and therefore it would have been impracticable for one Bishop to have taken the oversight of a Diocese as extensive as those of our Bishops. It would certainly be desirable if we could return to primitive practice in this respect — have smaller Dioceses and more Bishops.

There is every evidence that in the early age of the Church all Bishops were *equal* in rank and in authority ; and the principal ground for distinctions, was the superior worldly position which the Bishop of a large city, like Rome or Constantinople, would naturally have over one who dwelt in some more obscure place. In addition to this cause of distinction, was another, which works equally in all times and all places,— the superior mental and moral qualities of the man who holds the office. There

were no distinctions and no superiorities among the primitive Bishops except such as sprung from these two causes.

In the fourth century, after Christians had been freed from persecution by the favor of the Emperor Constantine, the churches in different parts of the world were enabled to perfect their arrangements for mutual intercourse and necessary legislation; and therefore we find that the different portions of the Church began about this time to take the form of *provincial* or *national* churches, legislating for themselves in minor matters, while they all submitted to the decisions of the general councils. For example, the churches within the bounds of Judea assembled at Jerusalem whenever there were objects of sufficient importance to call them together; and thus these churches were known in history as the "Church of Jerusalem." The churches in Egypt received their title from their principal church and went by the name of the "Church of Alexandria." The churches in Greece, Macedonia and Asia Minor were known as the "Church of Constantinople," because the Bishop of that city had a certain jurisdiction over all the Bishops in those coun-

tries. The churches in Italy were in like manner under tne jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and were known as the "Church of Rome." So the churches in Spain, in France (Gaul) and in Britain, had each their separate and independent organization, and were recognized as "the Church" of their respective countries.

All Bishops, in the early ages of the Church, being equal in rank, no Bishop had any right to intrude into the diocese of another, nor to exercise the functions of his office as a Bishop beyond the limits of the diocese which he was consecrated to preside over.* But for the purpose of more conveniently exercising discipline, the Bishops of the principal churches in each country or province were entrusted by common consent with certain rights and privileges above the rest of their brethren. They usually had some *distinctive title*, such as archbishop, primate, patriarch, metropolitan, or pope; they summoned the Bishops of their province to meet in councils, they commonly

*One of the canons called apostolical is as follows—"Let not a Bishop presume to ordain in cities or villages not subject to him, and if he be convicted of doing so without consent of those to whom such places belong, let him, and those whom he has ordained, be deposed."

presided in those councils; they received and examined accusations against the Bishops; they decided such cases of doctrine or discipline as were referred to them, and their decisions were usually acquiesced in and regarded as a final settlement of the matter in dispute.

TheBishop of Jerusalem had this sort of pre-eminence over all the other Bishops in Judea; the Bishop of Alexandria over all the Bishops in Egypt, the Bishop of Rome over all the Bishops in Italy, and in all other countries and provinces the same arrangement was made by which some one Bishop was invested with a certain authority over the other Bishops, but yet it was well understood that these presiding Bishops were not thereby constituted a higher *order* of the Ministry, nor did they pretend to any other rank than that of Bishops.

It will readily be understood that each nation which had been converted to Christianity had a complete and perfect *national* Church formed within its boundaries. There were first the separate congregations in the cities and villages, each having its presbyters and deacons; next there were the Bishops in every large city or district, who had the oversight of both clergy

and laity ; and, as the centre of unity or the working head of all ecclesiastical matters, there was the Metropolitan or Bishop of the chief city, who, while he discharged the proper duties of his office in his own diocese, had also the general direction and leadership of all that concerned the Church in the whole nation.

It may also be very clearly perceived how each National Church could be perfectly independent of all other churches and yet none differ from another in doctrine or organization or worship, in any important particular ; no Church being either a *rival* or an *opponent* of any other, but on the contrary each maintaining the most friendly and brotherly relations with all the others.

Several of these National Churches are in existence at the present time, while others have become extinct. The churchesof Jerusalem and Alexandria, once so distinguished, have been overrun by Mahometanism and have lost their independence as national Churches.

The Church of Carthage, once so numerous and so zealous, has been utterly destroyed.

The Syrian Church in India (planted by St. Thomas as tradition asserts), after

centuries of oppression by Pagans and Mahometans, still has a remnant left, holding the simple faith of the Apostles' creed, worshipping according to their ancient liturgy, and showing their line of Bishops back to the Apostle St. Thomas.

The Church of Constantinople is still in existence, and, in numbers at least, as powerful as in her best days, though she has to a great extent lost the spirit of true religion. It is now known as the Greek Church, the Bishop of Constantinople having now the same rank and title which he had in ancient times, namely, "Patriarch of the Eastern Church." (*Note*—The Russian branch of the Greek Church is a national church, but of later origin than the Church of Constantinople.) This church has departed somewhat from the true spirit of the Gospel and has added many corruptions to the doctrines and practices which it held in the Apostolic days, but still it has the *two creeds* as the foundation of its faith, and there are strong indications (particularly in the Kingdom of Greece) that it will sooncast off the additions which are the source of all its errors, and will reform itself by going back to the simplicity of its early faith.

The Church of Spain is still in existence, though for many centuries it has been sunk in the grossest corruption of faith and of practice, and has been fettered by the most servile compliance with the assumptions and the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome.

The Gallican Church or Church of France is also in existence, and also in subjection to the French Bishop of Rome, yet the morality of the Church has always been much higher than that of Spain or of Rome, and the authority of the Pope has not been received and at this time is not acknowledged in France to as great an extent as in Spain or Italy.

The Church of Rome is in existence, as all know, and not content within the bounds of his primitive diocese, nor even satisfied with the honorabledistinction of being the Metropolitan of Italy, the Bishop of Rome has exalted himself step by step above all his brethren in the Episcopal office, and claims the title and rights of Universal Bishop ; while the Church of which he is the head, in spite of Scripture and of History, sets up the preposterous claim of being the Mistress and Mother of all churches. Hereafter it will be shown in what manner the Bishop

which they still retain over a large portion of the Christian world.

Last, but not least, among the Apostolic Churches is the English Church. Five hundred years from her first foundation she stood in her independence and purity, holding only the simple faith and godly practices which she learned from Apostles and their immediate successors, governed by her own Bishops and by canons enacted in her own Councils, and acknowledging no superior authority but that of Christ. For more than nine hundred years she submitted little by little to the rule of the Roman Bishop and adopted the corruptions of the Church of Rome. Three hundred and fifty years ago she shook off the yoke of bondage, re-asserted her original independence, and casting off the corruption, false doctrine and superstition which had so deformed her while she was in bondage to Rome, she went back to the simple creeds which all held from the beginning of Christianity, to the simple liturgy which Apostles and martyrs had used, and to the pure morality which the Gospel enjoined at first, determined thenceforward to build on no foundation but

that of Christ and his Apostles. It is a grievous stain upon the English Church that for nearly a thousand years she listened to the enticing words of her erring sister at Rome; but who is he that will venture to cast a stone at her for so doing? Where is the man who can trace his spiritual genealogy through a *pure* and *uncorrupted* church back to the days of the Apostles? If there be such a one let him produce the history of *his* church free from all stain of false doctrine or evil practice, and he shall be allowed to accuse the English Church and bring her into judgment for any and all her past errors. But he who cannot find his Church *in existence at all* before the days of Luther and Calvin, *unless in the Church of Rome*, to which Church both Luther and Calvin belonged at first, that man cannot be allowed, without being challenged for gross inconsistency, to accuse the English Church of having once been in subjection to Rome.

The Church of England, like the Patriach Job, was once in great prosperity, happy in the abundant numbers of her spiritual children, and full of the blessing of the Lord; like Job she was tried with great and sore temptations, the

possession of riches and power ; like Job she partly fell and yet had grace sufficient not to let go her trust in her Redeemer ; like Job she awoke at last to the knowledge of her errors, confessed and forsook her sins, and then the Lord raised her from her humiliation, comforted her with the tokens of his love and favor, and sent her forth, chastened and made wiser by sorrow, to execute His purposes of love and mercy.

CHAPTER III.

The period of the decline of the English Church. — The Church quite pure in the time of Augustine. — Origin of using Latin in the Liturgy—its results. — Marriage of the Clergy prohibited, though customary at first. — Immunities granted to the Monasteries. — Their corruptions. — The good that they effected. — The Monasteries the schools of the middle ages. — Rise of the Papal authority in England. — The Pope's oppressive taxation of the English Church. — Changes in faith introduced by Papal authority. — Progress of error slow but constant. — The evil in the Church always more notorious than the good. — The English Church the purest in Western Europe. — Proofs that the Church was a living vine.

THE first step leading to a connexion between the Church of England and the Pope of Rome, was the mission of Augustine to convert the Saxons, in the year 596 ; the final separation of the English Church from the Roman Pontiff took place in the year 1534.* This period of nine hundred and thirty-eight years, during which the English Church was more or less in subjection to the authority of the Pope, is now to be examined ; and the examination will not

*In 1534 an act of Parliament was passed rejecting the Pope's supremacy, which amounted to a total separation from the Roman Church.

be a pleasant one. It can never be gratifying to a Christian, who has drawn his knowledge of the holy doctrines and the ennobling precepts of Christianity from the study of the Word of God and from the practice and teaching of a pure Church, to examine a record which shows how one false doctrine after another was received and taught by those whose especial duty it was to protect the faith from innovation; nor can it be pleasant to learn that through successive ages multitudes of those who had been consecrated as Christ's soldiers and servants in baptism were notoriously wicked and profligate men. But though it is not pleasant to examine this period in the history of the Church, it is *necessary* that it should be examined, if we would know the truth, or if we are to profit by the lessons of history. And it is necessary that we should examine the history of this period, putting aside, as far as the infirmity of human nature will permit, all spirit of unfair partizanship, all disposition to conceal any facts that may not be agreeable to us, and all tendency to make the most of isolated examples that may bear strongly in favor of our own views of truth.

The period of Papal domination in England was the period of the *decline* of the English Church. At the time of Augustine's mission, the faith of the Roman Church was very little altered from what it was in the time of the Apostles ; and the fact that Pope Gregory was so anxious to see the Saxons converted, and that Augustine and his fellow-laborers were so ready to undertake a mission fraught perhaps with great dangers, and certainly with great difficulties, is a conclusive proof that they were imbued with the true self-denying spirit of the gospel, — that they remembered and were willing to execute the great Apostolic commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The fact that the British Christians whom they found in England agreed with them on almost all points, is also a proof that *they* had not seriously departed from the original faith of the Church. But errors soon began to creep into the teaching of the Church, and along with those errors came also ungodly practices, which continued to grow worse and worse for a long space of time until their consequences became so insufferable that error

was no longer able to retain its hold, and a reformation was demanded and was effected.

One of the worst consequences that followed the mission of Augustine was the practice of saying the prayers and conducting the public service of the Church in the Latin language; for although the priests were strictly enjoined to preach every Sunday, and to explain the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the gospel to the people, yet it is very apparent to *us* that nothing could be better calculated to deprive the people at large of the light and advantages of the gospel, than having the public devotions in a language which they did not understand. And yet the origin of this use of Latin in the services of the Church was very simple and natural; for the Roman missionaries were accustomed to use it as *their native tongue*, and all their books were written in that language. The Saxons being in a state of barbarism and having no literature of their own, it was very natural that when Augustine and his successors attempted to instruct them, they should teach them in the language with which the missionaries themselves were most familiar. But the evils of this course were soon apparent.

for by the time of Alfred the Great (A. D. 871 to 901), according to the testimony of the King himself, there were very few persons in the Kingdom who could understand the prayers or could translate a letter from Latin into English. Alfred did very much to promote learning; he invited eminent scholars from all parts, and gave them honors and dignities; he established a public school for the education of his son Ethelweard and the young nobility; he translated into the Saxon language the works of Orosius, Boethius, and the ecclesiastical history of the venerable Bede, and for the instruction of the clergy he also translated the Pastoral of Gregory. So thorough were the measures adopted by Alfred to promote learning, that during the next forty years three Kings of other countries, Alan of Bretagne, Louis of France, and Haco of Norway, were sent to England to be educated, and the same degree of ignorance as prevailed before Alfred's time was never again known in England.

Another evil that followed the introduction of the Roman authority into Britain, was the establishment of *monasteries*, and the continued efforts *to prevent the marriage of the*

clergy. The marriage of the clergy had been objected to much earlier than the time of Augustine, but it had not been positively forbidden as it was afterwards ; so also there seem to have been monastic establishments even among the British Christians before Augustine's arrival, but their evil tendencies were not developed till some time afterward. The British Church before the time of Augustine appears to have allowed the clergy to marry ; and the Irish Church, which was closely connected with the British, certainly gave clergymen that liberty, for in the canons of St. Patrick and other Irish Bishops, set forth A. D. 456, directions are given in regard to the conduct of the *wives* of the clergy. St. Patrick declares that he was the son of Calphurnius, a deacon, and the grandson of Potitus, a priest. But the opinion that marriage, especially among the clergy, was a hindrance to piety, was very general in all parts of the Christian world at an early day. The Roman Church was strongly opposed to the marriage of the clergy, and the grand reason of the continued and determined opposition of the Popes to the practice, was found in the fact that the married

clergy, having ties of kindred and family, were strongly attached to their homes and their country; while those who were unmarried, having no such ties, were more readily subject to the Pope's authority, and less afraid of the consequences of carrying out *his* views when they were in opposition to those of their temporal sovereign, or even against the commands of their Bishops.

We find therefore that the monks were, from the time of Augustine, the especial favorites of the Popes, and that the most extraordinary privileges and immunities were granted to them. The following will serve as a sample: In the privileges granted by Pope Agatho to the monastery of Medhamsted, occurs this passage, "That neither king, bishop, earl, nor any one else, shall have any tax or tribute, or exact any military or other service from the abbey of Medhamsted. That the *Bishop* of the diocese *shall not dare to ordain*, consecrate, or do any thing in the abbey (unless at the request of the abbot), or exact from it any episcopal or synodical fine or tax of any description." Thus the monks, holding their privileges *directly from the Pope* and

being released in many cases from obedience to any one else, became the strongest adherents of the Papacy and the most zealous defenders of all the false teachings and unlawful assumptions of the Romish Church and Bishop.

Being thus placed beyond all control except that of the Superiors whom they chose from among their own number, they, after a while, became lax in morals, and instead of becoming holier by their seclusion from the world, they were guilty of intemperance and licentiousness and of all the self-indulgent practices that everywhere follow the possession of wealth without the restraints of authority and public opinion. The Monasteries finally became the most corrupt portion of the Church, and were suppressed by Henry VIII. in 1535 with the cordial approval of the large majority of the nation. But we should do great injustice to the memory of many worthy men, if we were not to mention the good that was effected by these monastic establishments. The notion that persons of either sex could serve God better by withdrawing from all the relations of domestic and social life, and spending their time in partial solitude, was almost universal

in the early ages of Christianity. It was a great mistake, and the Bible gives no countenance to any such views, but in examining the conduct of the men who founded monasteries and dwelt in them, we must bear in mind the opinions and customs of the age they lived in.

In rude and barbarous times, when the majority of the people were often engaged in war, as was the case among the early Saxons, it was natural that the most devout persons should seek a more quiet and Christian mode of life, by forming religious establishments such as the early monasteries. The monks were not usually required to perform military service, and their houses were generally safe from the attacks of either party in time of war; thus the monasteries tended to preserve peace and to diminish the horrors of war by giving an asylum to the weak and the defenceless. They had large possessions of land which they rented to the poorer people or cultivated themselves; thus they encouraged the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, and promoted habits of industry by insuring their tenants a fair return for their labor and immunity from the rapacity and extortion of the feudal lords. They promoted

hospitality by always giving food and shelter to any one who asked for it, whether he were beggar or king. They supported large numbers of the most destitute in their neighborhood by daily distribution of food. They advanced manufactures by having the means to pay for the erection and adornment of those splendid structures which have never been equalled since their times. But as study and devotion were the professed objects to which the monks devoted their lives, so the great benefit that they conferred on society was the preservation and promotion of *learning*. The monasteries were almost the only schools of the middle ages ; very few books were to be found outside of their limits ; hardly any writers were known in those days save the monks ; almost every copy of the Holy Scriptures or of the Liturgy was executed within the walls of a monastery ; and last, but not least, it is very plain from the records of those times that however far the majority of the monks may have failed of adorning their Christian profession by holy lives, yet there were never wanting men among them of true piety and real devotion.

The most conspicuous of the evils that fol-

lowed the mission of Augustine was *the acknowledgment of the authority of the Pope* in England. We have seen that the British Church would not and did not acknowledge Pope Gregory as their superior; but Augustine, having been sent by him, naturally felt that he owed an allegiance to his former superior, and hence he consulted the Pope frequently and paid great deference to his decisions. The opinion that, as the Popes were the successors of St. Peter, and as St. Peter held the keys of heaven, so the Popes were the highest Church authority on the earth, was rapidly gaining ground in Western Europe at this time, and England, following the example of Augustine, very naturally adopted the prevailing opinion.

Pope Gregory directed Augustine to apply to the Archbishop of Arles, in France, for consecration as a Bishop, and then desired him (Augustine) to consecrate twelve Bishops for England, vesting him with the authority of Archbishop over them. The supervision over the English Bishops which Gregory thus acquired was never relinquished by any succeeding Pope till the time of the Reformation.

In A. D. 793, Offa, king of Mercia, made a

pilgrimage to Rome, and while there made a grant of one penny yearly from every family in his kingdom, for the use of the English school at Rome, which was afterward considered as a tribute to the Pope and was paid pretty regularly for many centuries. This was the first pecuniary acknowledgment of the Papal supremacy, and if the Popes had been content with this tribute, it is quite probable that they might still be holding supremacy, in spiritual matters, over the English Church, as they now do over the greater part of western Europe. But the providence of God, which continually brings good out of evil, so ordered events that the covetousness of the Popes became one of the means of restoring the English Church to its primitive independence and purity. More anxious to enrich themselves and add to their power than to promote the interests of religion, the Popes seized upon every plausible pretext to levy new taxes upon the Church. Having commissioned Augustine to act as Archbishop at first, the Pope assumed the right to confirm the election of all succeeding Archbishops, and for conferring the *pall* or badge of the Archbishop's office large sums of money were

demanded and paid. From the confirming of an Archbishop in his office it was an easy step to claim the right of appointing or confirming the appointment of the other Bishops, and this abuse of power continued to grow until hardly any position of importance could be obtained by the clergy, unless it were either received by direct appointment from the Pope, or unless a large bribe had been paid to him in some form or other. Besides these taxes on preferments, the Popes frequently demanded direct taxes from all the clergy, and these demands were sometimes equal to *one half* of their yearly income.

The amount of money thus taken out of the country and put into the treasury of the Popes, was so enormous that it became such a serious political evil as could not fail to be noticed by every person. In the year 1376 the sum paid to the Pope was *five times* as much as that paid to the king.

These exactions caused great discontent, and after a while led the people to inquire how the Pope came to possess the power of taxing the English Church ; and when inquiry once commenced, it could not be checked by anything short of a complete reformation.

It would be tedious and needless to detail all the measures that were taken by the different Popes to gain authority where they had the shadow of a right to any; it is enough to have shown some of the steps by which the Roman Bishop came to have authority in a country that was never within the limits of his diocese or province, and to have indicated the excess to which that authority was finally carried.

It must not be supposed that these assumptions of the Popes were all quietly submitted to, and that no one presumed to question their right to interfere in the affairs of the English Church — by no means; long and severe was the struggle before the Roman Bishops were permitted to lord it over the rest of their brethren; but the Popes gained the victory, and for several centuries before the Reformation the power of the *Bishops* of Rome was more extensive and more absolute over England and all western Europe than ever was the power of the *Emperors* of Rome.

The next point to be noticed is the change that took place in the *faith* or doctrines of the English Church during its connexion with the Roman Church, and the changes that were

effected during the same period in the rites and ceremonies of the Church and in the morals of the clergy and people. These changes may all be summed up in one sentence. The Church fell into *errors* in *doctrine*, into *superstition* in *worship*, and into gross *corruption* in *morals*; she fell from the simplicity and purity of the early days of Christianity to the false and dangerous position of the modern Church of Rome. In consequence of the ascendency gained by the Popes over the English Bishops, and of the authority which they exercised in England, the false doctrines and the superstitious observances adopted from time to time by the Roman Church were soon believed and imitated in England; while, as the pretensions of the Popes increased, the wealth and power of the clergy increased in the same ratio, and, rising above the wholesome restraint of public opinion, they became loose in their morals and careless of their duties.

Errors in *doctrine* are never very rapid in their progress, especially where the faith is protected by a liturgy that embodies the great fundamental articles of Christianity, and we find therefore that the false doctrine was a long

time in *overshadowing* the true (for it has never happened in any church that had a liturgy, that the true faith was *thrown away* and a false one adopted in its place.) The belief in *purgatory* was made an article of faith in the year 1439, although as early as the middle of the third century we find some traces of a belief in it. The doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or the belief that the bread and wine of the sacrament are changed by consecration into the real body, blood, soul and Divinity of Christ, was not adopted in England till after the year 1000, nor was the idolatrous custom of *worshiping* the consecrated bread introduced till after that time. The *worship* of *images*, *relics*, and *pictures* commenced between the years 800 and 900. Prayers to the *Virgin Mary* and to the *Saints* began to be used about the same time. The laws of the English Church forbade the *marriage of the clergy* from about the year 700, but these laws were not vigorously enforced till a considerable time afterward. Though the growth of error was *slow*, it was *constant ;* and although the *creeds* of the earliest ages were still retained as the basis of the faith, yet for some time before the Reformation the doctrines

of the English Church did not differ in any respect from those of the Church of Rome.

The *morals* of the clergy and of the people seem to have been very bad in many cases. The higher clergy were often engaged in politics or spent their time in pleasure ; the lower clergy were often very ignorant, and the friars were noted as much for wickedness as for their pretended sanctity.

It should be remembered, however, in estimating the character of the clergy in those days, that the worst men are sure to be the most notorious, and therefore it is most likely there were *ten* good men in the ministry who passed quietly through the world, unnoticed and unrecorded, for every *one* whose vices gave him a place in the records of history. There were many bad men in the ministry in those days, for their names and their evil deeds have come down to us ; but I cannot believe that *all* or even that the *majority* were bad men, any more than I can now believe that the majority of the ministry are bad men, though hearing almost daily of the evil and inconsistent lives of *some* of them.

In the works of the poet Chaucer, who

flourished nearly two hundred years before the Reformation, when corruption and error were at their height, there is one of the most beautiful descriptions of a *good priest* that is to be found in the English language; it professes to be the portrait of a real personage, and if so, there must have been at least *one* fine specimen of the true minister of Christ in the English Church of that day.*

*CHAUCER'S PRIEST.

"A good man there was of religion,
He was a poor parson of a town,
But rich he was of holy thought and work,
He was a learned man, also a clerk,
That Christ's gospel truly would preach,
His parishioners devoutly would he teach.
Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
And such a one he was proved oft sithes,
Full loth were he to curse for his tithes,
But rather would he give, out of doubt,
Unto his poor parishioners all about,
Both of his offering and his substance,
He could in little have a suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne'er left, neither for rain nor thunder,
In sickness, nor in mischief, for to visit
The furthest in his parish, great or light
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
This noble example to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought, and afterward taught,
Out of the gospel he the words caught.
And this figure he added thereunto
That if gold rust, what shall iron do?

In the next chapter it will be seen that there were many of similar character, who were earnestly striving to bring about a reformation long before Luther and Calvin and Henry VIII. came out in open hostility to the Popes—indeed, long before they were born.

The usurped authority, of the Roman Bishops

For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
No wonder 'tis that a layman should rust.
And shame it is, if a priest take keep,
To see a foul shepherd and a clean sheep.
Well ought a priest example for to give
By his cleanness, how his sheep should live.
He set not his benifice to hire,
Nor left his sheep encumbered in the mire,
And ran to London, to St. Paul's
To seek himself a chantry for souls.
Nor with a brotherhood to be withold,
But dwelt at home and kept well his fold,
So that the wolf made them not miscarry,
He was a shepherd and not a mercenary.
And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was not to sinful men despiteous,
Nor of his speech dangerous nor dign,
But in his teaching discreet and benign.
To draw folk to heaven with fairness,
By good example, this was his business.
But if he knew any person obstinate,
Whether he were of high or low estate,
Him would he reprove sharply for the nonce.
A better priest, I trow, nowhere there is;
He waited after no pomp nor reverence,
He made himself no spiced conscience,
But Christ's lore, and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himself.'

over the English Church, was exercised for more than nine hundred years, during all which time the doctrine and the practice of the Church continued to get worse and worse, until the simplicity of the gospel was overshadowed by a mass of error and superstition.

It will doubtless seem strange to many that we should wish to trace our descent through a Church so deeply contaminated with error as was the Church of England for so long a period: it is *not pleasant* to do so, and if there *were* any *purer* line through which the blessings of the Christian covenant had been transmitted to us it would be very gratifying to seek out and develop its history. But the Church of England was as near to being pure as any, and, indeed, much purer than any Church in western Europe, during the period under consideration.*

*The promise of God to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, did not fail because our Blessed Saviour came through the womb of Ruth the *Moabitess*, and of Bathsheba who was guilty of *adultery*, because there was always enough of the pure stock of Abraham to keep the promise good. So the promise of Christ that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church, did not fail in the Church of England in consequence of her errors or corruptions, for, as has been shown, the true faith was always the *foundation* of her doctrines and there were always enough of true godly persons in the Church to keep its spiritual life from becoming extinct.

And at this point comes a grave question which he who desires to know and follow *the truth*, must look squarely and fairly in the face. The question is this—"Did the Church of Christ *die* in those ages of decline and corruption?" Did Christ withdraw his protecting hand from it, and did the Holy Spirit take his departure from it, leaving it the mere *shell* of a Church—a body without a soul?

Calvin and Luther, and the reformers in France and Germany, took for granted that the Church *was* dead and they proceeded to form *new* churches on their own responsibility; the English reformers did not consider their Church as dead, and they purged the old Church from its corruptions in preference to organizing a new one.* It concerns every

*"The Reformation or Protestantism did not make a *new* faith or Church, but reduced things to their primitive purity: plucked not up the good seed, the Catholic faith or true worship, but the after-sown tares of error, as image worship, purgatory, &c., which were ready to choke it. Did the reformation in Hezekiah's or Josiah's days set up a new Church or religion different in essence from the old one? Had it not been a ridiculous impertinency for one that knew *Naaman* before, while he stood by, to ask, where is Naaman? And being answered this is he, for the inquirer to reply, "it cannot be, for Naaman was a leper—this man is clean." Was not Naaman, formerly a leper, and now cleansed. the same person? In like manner the

lover of truth to settle for himself the question — which was right, the German or the English reformers, and this leads him back to the question "Was the English Church *dead* or *living?*" The facts of history give the answer. Was that Church abandoned by Christ and deserted by the Holy Spirit in which daily *prayer* was offered up in thousands of churches, in which the word of God was accessible to all that were learned enough to read it, in which the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *ten commandments* must be taught by every minister; was that Church dead which fed the poor and gave an asylum to the destitute, which could and did defend the weak and helpless against the rapine, lust and cruel tyranny of feudal lords and their savage soldiery; was it dead when every child was blessed with the water of baptism and every adult could partake of the life-giving food of the Holy Communion, when the peasant could kneel at the same altar with the king, and the censures of discipline fell as heavily on the

true visible Christian Church cleansed and uncleansed, reformed and unreformed is the *same* Church."—*S. Gardiner. — Gibson's collection of tracts.*

monarch as on the slave? No; it was *not* dead. The Church of England sinned; but Christ was merciful and did not cast her off; and the holy lives of thousands in her fold proved that in the worst of times the Spirit still remained to keep alive the decaying fire of piety, and preserve her for better days and a more glorious destiny.

CHAPTER IV.

The morning star of the Reformation. — The Church ready and anxious for Reformation. — John Wickliffe, the first Reformer. — Wickliffe's preparation for his work. — Controversy with the mendicant friars. — Refusal to pay tribute to the Pope. — Summary of Wickliffe's doctrines. — Statement of the doctrine of justification by faith. — Sound doctrine preached 500 years ago. — Wickliffe first brought to trial for heresy. — He denounces the friars on his sick bed. — His second trial. — His translation of the Bible. His third trial. — Is expelled from Oxford, but continues his labors. — His death. — Number and zeal of Wickliffe's disciples. — The fires of martyrdom kindle the fire of reformation.

In the last chapter we beheld the night of error and superstition gradually settling down on the Church of England, and yet saw that the fire of true piety here and there lit up the gloom; that the true faith was preserved entire, though almost buried by the false doctrines that men had heaped upon it, and that the Word of God was preserved and studied by the Church, to whose keeping it had been entrusted.

In this chapter it will be our pleasanter labor to watch how this seed of truth, so long buried, began to develope its hidden

life; to see how it *would* grow in spite of the obstacles that opposed it, and to trace how it did continue to grow until it brought forth a noble and abundant harvest.

The Reformation in the Church of England began about *two hundred years* before the actual renunciation of the Papal jurisdiction. Unlike the Reformation in France, Switzerland and Germany, it was a very slow and gradual movement. God, in his good providence, raised up a succession of wise and faithful men who saw and felt the errors, corruptions and oppressions under which the Church was laboring, and who were bold enough to declaim against those errors; the political power and the privileges of the higher clergy called forth many of the most powerful of the nobility to take ground against the unlawful assumptions of the Pope; and the scandalous lives of many of the clergy, together with the oppressive taxation, excited dissatisfaction and a desire for change, in the minds of a large portion of the lower and middle classes of the nation.

All the elements for a great popular movement existed in England early in the fourteenth century, — first, a dissatisfied people,

conscious that there were great wrongs and abuses connected with the Church, but not able to detect precisely what and where they were, — second, a powerful body of nobility, irritated by the claims of the higher clergy to superiority over them, and envious of the wealth which enabled those clergy to maintain their rank and surpass the nobles in luxurious display, — and third, a few pious and daring men, who were learned enough to have found out what was the disease that was eating out the vitals of the Church — who were anxious enough for the welfare of the Church to wish to reform and not to destroy it, and therefore were earnest in pointing out the disease in order to effect its cure, and who were so filled with holy zeal for the truth and with anxiety to save souls from eternal death, that they rose boldly above all fear of the consequences, and counted not even their lives dear to them, in view of the blessed results, to themselves and the people, of proclaiming boldly the Gospel of Christ in its integrity and purity. God raised up the preachers and qualified them for their work : they went forth in His strength and proclaimed His truth ; the people heard

them gladly, and the Holy Spirit gave to their words vitality and power, in thousands of pious souls; the nobles defended the preachers, partly from political motives and partly from a desire to have the Church reformed; and thus quietly but swiftly the errors of the Church were pointed out, the simple doctrines of the gospel were everywhere made known, and the Papal dominion in England, so far as it rested on the support of the popular voice, was effectually broken.

A brief account of some of the early Reformers will best show how these results were accomplished.*

Foremost among them all — earliest in the field and most distinguished for piety, learning and noble daring — was John Wickliffe, justly styled the "Morning Star of the Reformation." He was born about the year 1324, in a village called Wickliffe, in Yorkshire, where his ancestors had resided from the time of the Norman conquest. The family was respectable, and possessed considerable property, but did not

* This account of Wickliffe is abridged from "the Writings of Wickliffe," published by the London Religious Tract Society, London, 1831.

follow his views nor give him any assistance in his labors. Being expected to enter the Church as a minister, he was, at the proper age, placed at Queen's College, Oxford, whence he soon removed to Merton College, which was then the most distinguished of all the schools of the University. He became not only skilled in controversial divinity as taught by the Schoolmen, which was the most fashionable species of learning in those times, but also well versed in the Scriptures, which was then a rare accomplishment, and his writings show that though he had learned much from the study of the Fathers, yet it was mainly from the Bible that he formed his religious principles and drew his most effective arguments. His perusal of the Scriptures and the Fathers rendered him dissatisfied with the scholastic divinity of that age, while the knowledge of canon and civil law which he was obliged to obtain before he could be ordained, qualified him to detect the causes of the evils that afflicted the Church. He was also well acquainted with the laws and political rights of his own country. The four great Fathers of the Western Church, Jerome, Ambrose,

Augustine and Gregory are continually quoted by him, so as to show his intimate acquaintance with their writings. Wickliffe's ability as a scholar was acknowledged even by his bitterest opponents.

His mind must have received deep and very serious impressions from an awful visitation of Providence which occurred in the middle of the fourteenth century. Europe was shaken by a succession of *earthquakes ;* and, shortly after, it was ravaged by a *pestilence*, the effects of which were more rapid and extensive than at this day we can readily conceive. More than *one-third* of the people of England and of other countries in Europe, were swept away by it. (See Keightley's Hist. of Eng., chap. VII., and other authors.) That Wickliffe was deeply impressed by this event, appears by his frequent references to it while trying to awaken a careless and profane generation. And under a strong presentiment that the end of the world was approaching, he wrote his first publication, called "The last Age of the Church," in which he describes the corruptions then pervading the whole Church and State, as the main cause of that chastisement which Europe had

so lately felt. Such impressions as these evidently tended much to strengthen and prepare Wickliffe for the difficulties he was soon to encounter.

Thus we find him, in his thirty-second year, respected for his attainments in learning, deeply impressed with the importance of divine truth, awakened to a sense of the divine judgments, enabled already to break through the bands of superstition, and in possession of a clear knowledge of Christ and of a living faith in Him as a Saviour. God had selected an able champion and furnished him well for his task; and the conflict with error was close at hand.

The first circumstance which summoned Wickliffe to this conflict was a controversy with the *mendicant friars*. Some of them had settled at Oxford before the time of Wickliffe, where they attracted much notice by their professed freedom from the avarice so common among the other monks, and by their activity as preachers. They introduced many of the opinions afterwards adopted by the reformers, saying much in opposition to the authority of the Pope and in support of the authority of the Bible. But they were very loose in their

morals, they persecuted those who really labored to spread the knowledge of the truth, and their influence generally was unfavorable to the advancement of pure religion.

Against these friars Wickliffe wrote tracts, entitled, "Against able Beggary," "Of the property of Christ," and "Of idleness in Beggary;" and he went beyond the case of the friars to consider more fully all the vices of the priesthood. The University of Oxford sustained him in this controversy, for he was chosen warden of Baliol College in the year 1361. In the same year his college presented him to the living of Fillingham in Lincolnshire, and in 1365 he was appointed warden of Canterbury Hall, by Simon de Islip, the founder of the Hall, who was then Archbishop of Canterbury.

Another circumstance now occurred which helped to bring Wickliffe into notice This was the decision of the English Parliament to resist the claim of Pope Urban V., who attempted the revival of an annual payment of a thousand marks,* as a tribute or feudal acknowledgment that the Kingdoms of England and Ireland were held at the pleasure

*Equal to $3200.

Of the Popes; which claim was founded on the surrender of the crown by the pusillanimous King John, A. D. 1214. The tribute had not been paid for thirty-three years; Pope Urban V. demanded that the arrears should be settled, and the tribute regularly paid thenceforward, but King Edward III. and the parliament unanimously resolved not to pay either tribute or arrears. It will be seen that this was a question of great importance at that time, for at this period the Pope's authority over all persons, civil as well as ecclesiastical, was almost universally acknowledged in all western Europe, and this refusal to pay tribute to him was an open declaration, by the people and King of England, that they would not submit to his authority in temporal matters.

Wickliffe was personally called upon to defend the position taken by the King and parliament, and he wrote a tract discussing the question, in which occurs this passage — "*Christ* is the Supreme Lord, while the Pope is a man liable to mortal sin, and who, while in mortal sin, according to divines, is unfitted for dominion." The scandalous lives of the Popes at that time made this argument one of great

force and of cutting effect. Wickliffe concludes with this prediction, which was not long in being fulfilled, "If I mistake not, the day will come in which all such exactions shall cease, before the Pope will prove such a condition to be reasonable and honest."

Wickliffe was kept in a very conspicuous position, from this time forward, by the favor and friendship shown to him by John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, who was not only powerful as being the son of King Edward III., but as a man of ability and having great influence in affairs of state. In 1373 Wickliffe was admitted to the degree of Doctor in Divinity, and as this rank was rarely conferred in those days, it carried with it a considerable degree of influence which must have helped very much to diffuse his doctrines throughout the kingdom. His writings at this time were mostly lectures on theology, delivered as a Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and the following is a short summary of his opinions, taken from them :—

DOCTRINES TAUGHT BY WICKLIFFE.

He considered the *Holy Scriptures* as a divine revelation, containing a sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice.

The Pope's authority in *temporal* matters he wholly denied, granted to him authority in other respects only so far as Scripture allowed, and maintained that he might *err in doctrine* as well as in life.

The Church of *Rome* he considered not to be superior in authority to the Church of *England* or to *any other* Church. He did not allow that the *Pope* was *head* of the Church; and condemned the *extravagant authority* assumed by the Bishops and the higher clergy, and all attempts of any of the clergy to lord it over God's heritage instead of being examples to the flock.

He held the *seven* Sacraments as taught by the Church at that time, but only lavs stress upon *two*, that is, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The doctrine of *Transubstantiation* he wholly rejected. The doctrine of *Purgatory* he believed, but did not believe that the souls there could be benefitted by the prayers of men or the intercession of saints. His views on purgatory were considerably modified toward the close of his life. He allowed the memory of the *Saints* to be honored, but only that men might be excited to follow their example.

He did not admit that it was proper to worship or pray to them, but held that Jesus Christ was the *only* Mediator. *Pilgrimages* he wholly disapproved of, and the *worship of images* he frequently condemns. The granting of *pardons* and *indulgences* by the Pope he censured in the strongest terms; he held that forgiveness of sins could be obtained from God alone. He condemned the *celibacy of the clergy*, imposed at that time by Papal authority.

And in regard to the great question of the Reformation, whether we are justified by the *merits of Christ*, or by the merit of *our own good works*, his teaching was plain and positive in favor of Christ, as the following quotation will show: Wickliffe says, "Heal us, Lord, for *nought;* that is, *no merit of ours;* but for thy mercy, Lord, not to our merits, but to thy mercy give thy joy. Give us grace to know that all thy gifts are of thy goodness. Our flesh, though it seem holy, yet it is not holy. We are all originally sinners, as Adam, and in Adam; his leprosy cleaveth faster to us than Naaman's did to Gehazi. For, according to his teaching, we are all sinners, not only from our birth, but before, so that we cannot so much as

think a good thought unless *Jesus* the Angel of great counsel send it, nor *perform* a good work unless it be properly *his* good work. His mercy *comes before us* that we *receive* grace, and *followeth* us *helping* us and *keeping* us in grace. So then it is not good for us to trust in *our merits*, in our *virtues*, in our *righteousness*, but to conclude this point, good it is only to trust in *God*."

Remember that these words were written by a Presbyter of the Church of England, by a Doctor of Divinity and Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, by one of the chaplains of the king, by the intimate friend of the king's son, the Duke of Lancaster; remember that they were written *five hundred years ago*, and that very few Doctors of Divinity at the present day can state the doctrine of Justification by Faith more clearly than it is here stated; and you will perceive that in the worst day that ever came on the Church of England, her light was very far from being put out, and you will also readily imagine what success a man of such abilities, such learning, such piety, and such a conspicuous position must have met with in reviving among the

great body of the laity the practical knowledge of true religion.

In the year 1374, another difference arose between the English nation and the Pope. Seven English Bishops had died during the pestilence, and the Pope had filled all their places with *foreigners*, to the great discontent of the nation. An embassy was sent to remonstrate with the Pope, but after nearly two years of evasions and delay, they returned with very little accomplished. Wickliffe was one of the ambassadors, and what he saw while thus engaged, convinced him more than ever of the corruptions of the Papacy, and of the necessity for a thorough reformation. In 1376 Parliament was aroused to consider the intolerable exactions of the Popes ; a remonstrance of that body states that the taxes paid to the Pope yearly out of England were *five times* the amount paid to the King, also that the richest prince in Europe had not the *fourth part* of the income that the Pope received from England alone, and the same document declared, in quaint but forcible phrase, "that God had committed his sheep to the Pope to be *pastured*, and not to be *shorn* or *shaven*."

Wickliffe's boldness in spreading his opinions and in exposing abuses, at last roused the Bishops and the clergy who were of the Pope's party to make a determined effort to silence him, and in February, 1377, he was cited to appear before the Bishop of London to answer certain charges brought against him for holding and publishing erroneous and heretical doctrines. On the day appointed he made his appearance, but attended by his friend the Duke of Lancaster, and lord Henry Percy, lord marshal of England. The presence of these powerful nobles deterred the Bishop from doing any thing more than venting his spite at them for their interference, and the assembly breaking up in disorder, the proceedings against Wickliffe were dropped.

In June, 1377, the Pope sent orders to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the University of Oxford, requiring them to seize and imprison Wickliffe, to take his confession, ascertain distinctly what were his doctrines, and hold him in custody till further instructions were sent. The University would not suffer him to be imprisoned, but he

was again cited to appear for trial in the early part of the year 1378.

At this time the Duke of Lancaster had lost his political influence, to a great extent, and was unable to give Wickliffe assistance ; but the powerful impression that his teaching had produced on the people was now apparent. Considerable crowds surrounded the place of trial, many forced an entrance and openly declared their attachment to the reformer ; and Sir Lewis Clifford, in the name of the Queen Mother, forbade the Bishops from pronouncing any definite sentence. Amid these labors and persecutions Wickliffe was taken sick and was expected to die ; the mendicant friars whom he had so often assailed, concluded that this would be a good time to induce him to retract what he had said about them, and a delegation of them visited him in his sick room, accompanied by the civil authorities of the city as witnesses of his recantation. Wickliffe heard their requests and their reasons for recantation, in silence and unmoved ; when they had finished, he made signs to his attendants to raise him in his bed, and, summoning all his remaining strength, he loudly exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live,

and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars."

He did live, and not only declared the evil deeds of the friars, but, five years later, in 1383, he finished the greatest work of his life, THE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. Copies of Wickliffe's Bible were rapidly multiplied, and for the first time since the Papal dominion began in England, the word of God was placed in the hands of the people in their own language. The hostility excited against him among the Papal party, in consequence of this translation, was exceedingly bitter. One of his enemies (Knighton) thus complains of him — "Christ delivered his Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons according to the state of the times and the wants of man. But this master John Wickliffe translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the laity and to women who can read than it formerly had been to the most learned of the clergy. The jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the people, and what was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy

and divines, is made forever common to the laity."

Let it be forever remembered, that the first man who in modern times gave the Bible into the hands of all the people, was John Wickliffe, a Presbyter of the Church of England, and that this most effective of all reformations was successfully accomplished *one hundred and thirty-four years* before *Luther* preached against indulgences, and *one hundred and forty-eight* years before *Henry VIII.* directed the Bishops to prepare a new translation of the Scriptures.

In 1382, Courtney, Bishop of London, who was the leader of the Papal party, having procured authority from the king, in defiance of the will of Parliament and contrary to law, set himself to the work of persecuting Wickliffe and his followers. Wickliffe was again summoned to trial, and this trial proved that he was not a mere political reformer, but an earnest and true Christian and a faithful ambassador for Christ. His former friend and patron, the Duke of Lancaster, who wished to regain the good will of Courtney, advised him to submit to the Bishop's requirements in matters of doctrine, and even at Oxford, where he had

been so honored, no one was found bold enough to take his part. The question on which he was tried was the doctrine of Transubstantiation, one of such an abstract nature that he might easily have framed his answers so as to have satisfied his judges and avoided their censure ; but he was too honest and fearless to do this. He boldly declared his former opinions and maintained them with great learning and skill. The assembly condemned his doctrine as heretical, and being at that time afraid to proceed further, they procured a mandate from the king ordering the expulsion of Wickliffe and his followers from the University within seven days.

Though Wickliffe was thus expelled from Oxford, neither his tongue nor pen was bound, but he continued to preach at Lutterworth, of which parish he was rector, and his tracts and sermons, composed at this period, were copied and circulated very extensively. The danger which he incurred by this course, was greater than any to which he had previously been exposed, but he pursued his course with unwavering courage, having fully made up his mind to suffer martyrdom, if it should be

necessary, rather than deny or keep back the truth. The stroke which he expected, did not, however, fall upon him; the distracted political state of the country absorbed the entire attention of the leaders, and Wickliffe was left to pass his few remaining days undisturbed. He died on the last day of the year 1384, from a stroke of paralysis.

At the time of Wickliffe's death, his disciples were very numerous. Knighton, his enemy and contemporary, says, "The number of those who believed in Wickliffe's doctrine, very much increased and was multiplied, like suckers growing from the root of a tree. They everywhere filled the kingdom; so that a man could scarcely meet two people on the road, but one of them was a disciple of Wickliffe. They so prevailed by their laborious urging of their doctrines, that they gained over half the people, or a still greater proportion, to their sect." This testimony is very valuable, as being the unwilling evidence of an enemy to the great success of the labors of Wickliffe and those who sympathized with him.

With half the people on the side of reformation, with the errors and corruptions of the

Church so clearly exposed as they had been for upwards of thirty years of Wickliffe's preaching, with the Holy Scriptures translated into their own tongue, and in circulation through all the land, and, most of all, with a large number of truly pious and well-instructed Christians, whose hearts the Holy Spirit had touched through these influences, who were bold to maintain and zealous to propagate their faith, the Reformation in England may be considered as having fully begun, and begun in so wise a manner, and upon such correct principles that it was not within the power of man to stop it.

After Wickliffe's death, persecutions were commenced, and were continued at intervals until the general Reformation in the time of Edward VI.; but they only proved the truth of the proverb that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. Many, distinguished for rank and learning, were persecuted, among whom were Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, and Reynald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester. Lord Cobham was put to death, and Pecock was expelled from the House of Lords and deprived of his bishopric. A very considerable

number of people of less note, were put to death, and a great multitude were subjected to imprisonment, torture, or punishment of some sort, for teaching the truth, or for owning some of the writings of Wickliffe.

Yet the efforts of the Papal party were all in vain; they prevented the open circulation of Wickliffe's Bible, but it was secretly kept and secretly studied, and *orally* taught; they covered up the fire, but it was not put out; the time had come, in God's good providence, for the Church to be purified, and these fires, kindled in Wickliffe's time, were only waiting for the right man to uncover them, when they would burst out in a universal blaze throughout the land, and consume the last trace of Papal dominion and Antichristian corruption.

CHAPTER V.

The Church of England during the reign of Henry VIII. — Reformation desired. — Obstacles in the way of obtaining it. — God provides a leader for the reforming party. — Causes that led Henry VIII. to quarrel with the Pope. — Henry's efforts to keep on friendly terms. — His failure, and open rupture. Henry is forced to aid in reformation against his will. — Important improvements allowed by the king. — The wrath of man overruled to promote the glory of God.

THE Scriptures everywhere teach us that God overrules all events to accomplish His designs, that He makes the wrath of man praise Him, and often causes the evil deeds of evil men to work out for others the most beneficial results. A clear and forcible illustration of this truth will be found in the history of the English Church during the reign of Henry VIII.

We have now reached that period in the history of the Church when the desire for a reformation began to show itself in open and powerful action, and when, by the good providence of God, the passions of a headstrong and licentious monarch were made to bring

about a considerable reformation in the Church, and a complete deliverance from bondage to the Bishop of Rome.

When Henry ascended the throne of England, there was no more zealous advocate of all the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome than he. When Luther, in 1517, came out and boldly exposed the errors and corruptions of the Church, Henry wrote a treatise *against* the doctrines of Luther, with which the Pope was so much pleased that he gave to him the title of "Defender of the Faith," which title the sovereigns of England still retain. Henry *never* was a friend to Luther, nor to the doctrines which Luther taught; and yet he contributed more to the spread of those opinions in England than any other man. Let us examine and see how so strange a result was brought about.

When Henry VIII. came to the throne, there were very many persons in England who might properly be called *Reformers*, though there was no great champion ready to give utterance to their wishes, or definite direction to their plans, as Wickliffe had done previously, and as Luther did afterwards in Germany. The

teachings and writings of Wickliffe had awakened the minds of large numbers of the English people, and this awakening had continued to the time of Henry VIII. The Bible, which Wickliffe had translated into English, had been in the hands of the people for about one hundred and fifty years, and it is a fair inference to suppose that many persons must have been convinced that it gave no countenance to the errors and evil practices of the Church. There was undoubtedly a *large minority*, if not a *majority* of the English nation, who wished for a reformation of some sort. But they had *no leader ;* there was no one who dared to take his life in his hand, and openly attack the errors and abuses which so many saw and deplored.

Besides, the obstacles in the way of a reformation seemed almost insurmountable. In the first place, there was the power of the *Pope*, which was then a terror to *kings*, much more to *private* persons ; there was then the power of the *king*, who was at first a most zealous defender of things as they were ; there was the influence and authority of the *Bishops*, who were bound by law to punish all who

differed from the doctrines of the Church ; and there was the great wealth of the monasteries, which were all most devoted in their adherence to the Pope ; — all these and many other influences stood directly opposed to whosoever should proclaim himself an opponent of the doctrines, or a reformer of the abuses, held and practised in the Church. It is, therefore, no wonder that no great champion of *Reform* was found, for such an one could not have kept his head upon his shoulders for six months. It is no wonder that good men kept their thoughts to themselves, or only spoke and acted on a small scale. But still the fire was burning, though secretly ; it was spreading unperceived through all the land, and was ready to burst out everywhere into an open flame, so soon as a favorable opening should be afforded.

The Lord, who had, by the agencies that have been before spoken of, prepared the hearts of many of his people for a reformation, now raised up a *leader* in the person of Henry VIII. A man who was cruel, tyrannical and licentious, and who was, moreover, a violent opponent of Luther and of the reformation which he was accomplishing, became the chief

instrument in bringing about a reformation in the Church of England. And it is worthy of notice, also, that, humanly speaking, the king was the *only person* who could have been the leader of this movement without having it result in terrible persecution, bloodshed, and probably civil war.

The necessities of the case required a *political* head to what was, in effect, a *religious* movement; for the power of the Pope, being political as well as religious, could not be successfully resisted except by employing political power to keep down persecution, as well as religious argument to overthrow error. Thus was the good providence of God most clearly shown in the selection of a leader for the reformation of the English Church — a leader, the *most unlikely* of all others to favor a reformation, and yet the *only* man who could *peaceably* bring it about.

The circumstances which led King Henry VIII. to renounce the authority of the Pope over himself and the English Church, are so familiar to all readers of English history, that they will be here narrated in the briefest manner.

Henry had married the widow of his elder brother, having obtained permission from the Pope to do so; but his children all dying except one, he began to doubt the lawfulness of the marriage, and applied to the Pope to grant him a *divorce*. About this time, he had set his affections very strongly upon Anne Boleyn, one of the queen's maids of honor, whom he desired to make his wife; and his passion for this lady, together with his scruples in regard to the legality of his marriage, rendered him exceedingly anxious to obtain a divorce. But the Pope hesitated about granting it, as he would thereby have greatly offended the powerful emperor of Germany, Charles V., who was a near relative of the English queen. Being unwilling either to grant the divorce, through fear of displeasing the emperor of Germany, or to refuse it, and thus offend the king of England, the Pope adopted a middle course, and used all possible methods to *delay* the decision, until the patience of Henry was exhausted and he determined to take the matter into his own hands. In accordance with a suggestion of Cranmer, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, the king

requested the opinion of the Universities, and the most learned men of France and England, as to whether his first marriage was lawful, and they all returned the same answer, that the marriage with a brother's widow was contrary to the law of God, and therefore null and void from the beginning.

After this decision, which accorded so well with the king's wishes, he married Anne Boleyn, but still wished to remain on friendly terms with the Pope, and to obtain his consent to his second marriage.

To preserve these friendly relations, the king sent messengers to Rome to justify his conduct to the Pope; but the messengers being accidentally delayed on their journey, and the agents of the emperor of Germany being urgent with the Pope to give his decision, he decided *against* granting the divorce. The English and French ambassadors at Rome requested the Pope to delay his decision for a short time, and suggested that the expected messengers might have been accidentally hindered on their journey; but the Pope, who had been exceedingly slow and cautious for the whole *four years* in which the question had

been before him for decision, suddenly became so rash and impatient that he would not wait a *few days* for a messenger, and pronounced sentence *against* the king, *just as the messenger entered the city* bringing overtures of peace and reconciliation.

When Henry found that his sincere wish to preserve peace with the Pope had been treated so contemptuously, he resolved to carry into full effect the bill which had already been passed in Parliament, abrogating the supremacy of the Pope in England, and requiring all the clergy and civil officers to take an oath renouncing the authority of the Pope, and acknowledging that of the king.* This oath was readily taken by a large majority of those

*Henry propounded to the Bishops and clergy in the provincial synods of England, to the celebrated Universities, and to the great monasteries of the kingdom, the following question, viz: "Whether the Bishop of Rome hath any greater jurisdiction conferred on him, in Holy Scripture, in this realm of England than any other foreign Bishop?" The answer was — "The Bishop of Rome hath NOT any greater jurisdiction conferred on him, in Holy Scripture, in this realm of England than any other foreign Bishop." In this answer all the Bishops of England united, with the exception of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. The unanimity with which all the synods, Bishops, Universities, and monasteries denied the Pope's jurisdiction, shows how thoroughly the way was prepared for reformation before Henry VIII. took any steps towards it.

who were required to take it, and, from that time, all connexion between the Church of England and the Pope of Rome was completely dissolved, except for a few years during the reign of Mary.

But the Church was not yet *reformed* — very far from it. Only one step had been taken in that direction, though the consequences of that step were tremendous, and its ultimate benefits incalculable. The power of the Pope as the earthly head of the Church had been denied, and his authority had been trampled under foot. This was taking out the *keystone* from the arch which ignorance and superstition had been constructing for ages, and when the keystone was gone, the whole structure was obliged to fall, and very soon did fall, never to be rebuilt. The Pope's spiritual power reverted to the Bishops, to whom of right it belonged, and his political power reverted to the King. It was stated that Henry did not wish, nor intend to become a reformer of the Church; yet having made a beginning, by renouncing the authority of the Pope, he was compelled by circumstances to go still further. His second wife, Anne Boleyn, was

a friend of reformation, and a friend also to Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the true religious leader of the reformation in the English Church. Henry loved Cranmer, relied on him, trusted him, and to Cranmer alone the capricious monarch remained true and faithful all his life. Through Cranmer's influence examinations were had into the lives of the clergy, and many scandalous abuses were thereby removed. The Bible was put into more general circulation than ever it had been before, the clergy were required to be better instructed themselves and to attend more closely to the instruction of their people, and homilies or sermons were printed, which the clergy were required to read to their congregations.

The monasteries and religious houses for monks and nuns were all broken up ; which, though it was a step taken by the king for the sake of seizing upon the wealth which these houses possessed, was yet a most important step towards reform, since the morals of many of these communities were very corrupt, since they were the strongholds of the Pope's power, and because the influence which they exerted

over the lower classes of the people was very powerful and very injurious.

The belief in *Purgatory*, which was then, and now is, the most powerful engine for promoting superstition and upholding the power of the Popes, was preached against and ridiculed and finally rejected from the doctrines of the English Church.

The laws authorizing persecution were made much milder, though they were still put in force to some extent and many persons suffered for their opinions, during Henry's reign.

Though most of the Church service was still in Latin, yet the Litany, in very nearly the same form in which it is now used, was printed in the English language and made part of the regular service in all Churches. And in addition to the publication and distribution of the Bible, which was declared to be the rule of faith and which the people were exhorted to study, it was ordered that in every parish the children should be taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and should be instructed by the clergy in their meaning.

Still, much remained to be done before the Church could be considered thoroughly reform-

ed in doctrine and in practice. Transubstantiation was still a doctrine of the Church, the clergy were not allowed to marry, the cup was denied to the laity in the communion, private masses were still in use, the Latin language was still used in a part of the service, confession to the priests was still customary, and persecution was authorized by law; and yet, in reviewing the history of the English Church during the reign of Henry VIII., we cannot help being surprised, that so much should have been accomplished, towards establishing pure religion, by so corrupt a leader; and especially may we be astonished when we reflect that it was his headstrong temper, his licentious passions, and his rapacious thirst for money which led him to do those things that afterwards proved most beneficial to the Church.

Who can fail to see in all these things a most striking confirmation of the declaration, "The wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Who can observe all this and not acknowledge that human plans and human policy are very short-sighted, and, if he rejoice in the reformation which was brought about by such means, can

fail to thank that Almighty Power which setteth at naught the wisdom and prudence of man, and governeth the world after the counsel of his own will, making "all things work together for good to them that love him."

CHAPTER VI.

The Reformation completed by Edward VI. and Archbishop Cranmer. — Thoroughness of Cranmer's reforms. — Extent of the reforms, and mode of accomplishing them. — Removal of images from the Churches. — Cranmer's moderation in reforming the Prayer Book. — Alterations which were made in the Prayer Book. — Instructions to the clergy. — Favor shown to foreign reformers. — Proposition for a general confederation of all Protestant Churches. — Cranmer's plan the only feasible one ever proposed. — Cranmer did not found a *new* Church.

EDWARD VI., the son and successor of Henry VIII., was as unlike his father as light is unlike darkness. Although he was only ten years old when his reign commenced, and only sixteen when he died, yet all historians agree that he was possessed of remarkable powers of intellect, and of equally uncommon piety and devotion. He was a warm friend of reformation, and the persons, appointed by the will of Henry VIII. to govern the kingdom until he came of age, were also in favor of it.

Foremost among these was Archbishop Cranmer, who seems to have exercised extensive powers in religious matters, during this reign, and who, it will be remembered, was the

favorite counsellor of Henry VIII., and the real leader* of all the reforms which were accomplished during his reign. The position of Cranmer, as Archbishop of Canterbury and the ecclesiastical head of the English Church, and also as one of the principal advisers of the young king, gave him power to carry out his plans for reform, without hindrance.

The health of Edward was so delicate that

* The results of the unnatural and unscriptural relation of the Church of England to the Bishop of Rome, are thus summed up by Bramhall, who has adduced a mass of facts to show that the imperious temper of Henry VIII. was not the real ground for renouncing the Papal supremacy in England.

"First, — the most intolerable extortions of the Roman court, committed from age to age, without hope of remedy.

"Secondly, — the most unjust usurpation of all rights, civil, ecclesiastical, sacred and profane, of all orders of men, Kings, Nobles, Bishops, &c.

"Thirdly, — the malignant influence and effects of this foreign jurisdiction, destructive of the right ends of ecclesiastical discipline, producing disunion in the realm, factions and animosities between the crown and the mitre, intestine discords between the king and his barons, bad intelligence with neighbor princes, and foreign wars.

"Fourthly, — a list of other inconveniences, or rather mischiefs. that did flow from thence; as, to be daily subject to have new articles of faith obtruded upon them, to be exposed to manifest peril of idolatry, to forsake the communion of three parts of Christendom, to approve of the Pope's rebellion against general councils, and to have their Bishops take an oath — contrary to their oath of allegiance — to maintain the Pope in his rebellious usurpations."

there was very little hope of his living to manhood, and the views of the Princess Mary, who would be the successor upon Edward's death, were so strongly opposed to reformation, that Cranmer foresaw the time would be short in which he could accomplish his plans. He accordingly set himself to work with all diligence, and used all his authority to further the work of reform.

The result proved that he was correct; the king reigned but six years, yet in that time the outward reformation of the Church was so far advanced that its doctrines and worship, as they were established when Edward VI. died, did not differ materially from what they are now.*

While Cranmer was engaged in making these

* Since the reign of Edward VI. the Book of Common Prayer has undergone several authorized examinations, and some few changes of importance have been made. Such are the restoration of the form of words originally addressed to communicants, uniting it with the words that had been substituted for it in the second Liturgy; the addition of certain prayers and thanksgivings, including the prayers for Parliament, and for all conditions of men, and the general thanksgiving. The former change was made in the reign of Elizabeth, the latter in that of Charles II.

The two Books of Common Prayer set forth by authority of Parliament in the reign of Edward VI., preface, p. 33, and note to p. 38.

reformations in the doctrines and worship of the Church, there was a majority of the Bishops who were friendly to the reform measures, and large numbers of the clergy and people were of the same mind; yet there was not that earnest wish for reformation, in the minds of the majority, which would have forced the work on to immediate completion, without the aid of those in authority. Cranmer went beyond the demands of public opinion at that time, and very far beyond the point at which the majority of the nation were contented to stop, during the reign of Henry VIII.

He reformed the doctrines and practices of the Church, just as far as he considered it expedient and necessary that they should be reformed, and he did this without waiting for public opinion to demand further reforms, but rather in advance of public sentiment.

Knowing that there were still many of the clergy who were violently opposed to his measures, he used his temporal authority to prevent them from creating any division or disturbance in the Church, and therefore simply obtained a royal order that all his measures should be carried out by the inferior clergy, under the

penalty of being deprived of their benefices, if they refused to comply.

Very few refused, and, although there must have been very many who did not approve of his course, and did not believe his doctrines, the whole church was outwardly reformed, by Cranmer's exertions, in the short space of six years.

It was reformed in its doctrines, from the half popish creed of Henry VIII. to the thoroughly protestant belief which it holds at the present day; its worship was changed by translating all its services into the English language, so that all the people might understand and join in it, and the additions, which corrupt superstition had engrafted upon the simple liturgies of the early ages, were unsparingly cut off by this thorough reformer.

It will be interesting, as well as profitable, to set forth somewhat in detail the mode in which Cranmer accomplished his reforms; for the better method, which he used in reforming, is one great reason why the English Church of the present day possesses so many valuable and beautiful relics of the primitive and Apostolic ages, which the churches founded

by the continental reformers have entirely lost.

The first reform which Cranmer attempted, after the accession of Edward had given him almost unlimited authority, was the removal of images of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints from the churches. His course in this matter will serve as a good specimen of his general mode of procedure. Nearly every church in the land must have possessed images of the Saints, and some churches had very many of them.

Doubtless these images were regarded with high favor, by nearly all the people, and were bound to them by many hallowed associations, so that they could have hardly endured that any indignity should be offered to them, until they were convinced of the evils that attended their use.

Cranmer saw the evil of permitting images in churches, and determined to have them removed. If he had chosen, he might at once have ordered the removal of every image from every church, and thus have accomplished his purpose almost immediately ; but he saw that such a course would create alarm and excite

needless prejudice against the reform measures, in the minds of great numbers of the people. Yet, it was well known, through all the land, that there had been some *abuses* connected with the use of images; that extravagant honors, amounting to absolute idolatry, had been paid at certain shrines, that miracles were supposed to be wrought at others, and that such abuses had been the sources of great profits to those priests under whose charge these shrines were, and that the shrines themselves had been the means of promoting superstition among the people.

In order, therefore, to call the attention of the people to the *evils* of image worship, without exciting their passions, Cranmer issued injunctions to the *clergy* to take down all such images as had been *abused* by improper devotion, and to avoid all such customs as tended to promote superstition. The *people* were forbidden to interfere in the matter, and when over-zealous persons attempted to run before they were sent, they were severely reproved, and threatened with heavy penalties. In order to give men time to think upon the subject, a year was allowed to elapse, after the order to

remove the particular images which had been *abused* by superstitious practices, before a second order was issued directing the removal of *all* images.

The same course of moderation and caution was adopted in preparing the Book of Common Prayer. The service book, then in use, was all in *Latin*, except the Litany ; it was at once desired to have the whole service in English, yet, as there was some objection to this, it was not decided to make the change until a full discussion had been held on the question, by both parties.

Not only was the service book in Latin, but it sanctioned many false doctrines and superstitious practices, such as Transubstantiation, Prayers to the Saints, and various other errors ; yet there was in it so much that was venerable for its antiquity, deeply devotional in expression, and unexceptionable in doctrine, that Cranmer was unwilling to lay it aside and make an entirely new Prayer Book. He therefore appointed a number of learned and pious men to examine the service carefully, and remove all things erroneous in doctrine or superstitious in practice ; while he retained

every expression and every custom against which no valid objection could be raised.

Very little of the Prayer Book was original with Cranmer, and that is one reason why it was then accepted, so readily, by the Church, and why it has continued to hold so high a place in the affections of the English people, to the present time. Cranmer did not shock the innocent prejudices of the nation by violently tearing down everything which had been connected with corruption, superstition or false doctrine, but simply removed the *erroneous* parts of the Church's worship, and left what was good and true to stand as it was. He rightly judged that customs which were right in themselves, and to which men had become attached by long habit, were better for them than usages entirely new; and that prayers and hymns, which had been in use since the formation of the Church, were better adapted to devotional purposes, than such as he or his associates could compose, although Cranmer could command the services of very learned and pious men. The principal *additions* to the service, which were made by Cranmer's authority, are the Sentences, Exhortation,

Confession and Absolution, at the beginning of the service, and the Ten Commandments in the Communion Office; all the other changes, which he made, were merely the leaving out of what was false in doctrine or superstitious in practice.

Cranmer also directed his attention to the moral improvement of the clergy, and issued several injunctions, the object of which was to make the clergy more attentive to the instruction of their flocks. To this end he had the Catechism prepared, and directed that the children should be thoroughly instructed in it.*

He ordered that Bishops, and such other clergy as were competent, should preach a certain number of sermons during the year, while he took away the license to preach from those who were too ignorant to discharge the duty properly. He also procured the passage of an act of Parliament allowing the clergy to marry, and another one abolishing the penal-

* The catechism, here referred to, was set forth A. D. 1548, translated from the Latin of Justus Jonas. In the last year of Edward VI., A. D. 1553, a catechism for schools was published. The author is not certainly known, but "Whosoever was the author," says Strype, "the Archbishop we may conclude to be the furtherer and recommender of it to the King."—*Strype's Cranmer, Vol. II.*, pp. 4, 8.

ties which had previously been inflicted for heresy.

The persecutions and other troubles, encountered by the reformers in Germany, France and Italy, drove many of them to take refuge in England, where they were permitted to establish congregations and to use their own modes of worship. Several learned reformers from foreign countries were appointed to situations as instructors in the Universities, and, by their counsel, materially assisted Cranmer in carrying out his plans for reform.*

His intercourse with these learned and pious foreigners doubtless suggested to Cranmer a most happy idea, which it seems a great pity he should not have been able to put into execution. This idea was no less than a plan for a confederation of the organizations of the reformers in Germany, France and other countries on the continent of Europe, with the Church of England.†

*"At this time, therefore, there were at the Archbishop's house, (besides Bucer), A'Lasco, Peter Martyr, Paulus Fagius, Peter Alexander, Bernardine Ochin, * * * * * and others whose names do not occur." — *Strype's Cranmer, Vol. II.*, p. 142.

† In a letter to Philip Melancthon, Cranmer says — "This is now my great object. I therefore entreat that you will aid

They would have received a full and perfect organization by choosing Bishops for themselves, and having them consecrated by the Bishops of the Church of England; and then the churches, thus organized, would have united in a general confederation of all the Protestant churches, leaving the domestic concerns of each National Church to be settled by its own members, while the whole confederation, working in harmony and agreeing in sentiment, would have presented a united and formidable front against the errors and assumptions of Popery.

Cranmer had some correspondence with Calvin and Melancthon upon the subject; but the death of king Edward, shortly after, and the troubles with which he found himself compelled to battle, prevented any thing further from being accomplished. Could Cranmer's

us with your presence and counsel, and not so fortify your mind against my importunity as to appear wanting to your own vows, and opposed to the manifest calling of God."— In March, 1552, he wrote two letters, one to Bullinger, the other to Calvin, in each of which he contends that as the Papists were assembled at Trent, so the Protestants should hold a synod of their most learned men for the settlement of doctrine, and that this synod should be held in England, or elsewhere, as was most convenient. — *Strype's Cranmer, Vol. II.*, p. 191.

design have been carried out, and could a confederation have been formed among all reformers, which should have recognized only the great articles of the Christian faith as binding on the conscience, while it secured to all a valid and Apostolic ministry, with churches organized on the same general principles, it would seem as if many of the troubles which have since afflicted Protestant Christendom would have been entirely unknown.

At that time there were but few points of difference among leading reformers, and those might have been disposed of with comparative ease; but, as years have rolled on, these first *differences of opinion* have been magnified into *articles of faith*, they have been expanded into systems of theology, and whole rivers of ink have been wasted in bitter and profitless discussions upon them; churches, colleges, and theological schools have been built to perpetuate them, until now the breach is so wide that very few ever think of making the slightest attempt to repair it, but go on making it wider and wider, bequeathing still greater troubles to the generations to come than our fathers have bequeathed to us. But it should be a

matter of especial gratification to the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, when taunted with being *"exclusive"* and not willing to *"unite"* with other Christians, that they can point to the noble martyr, Thomas Cranmer, the leading reformer and ecclesiastical head of the Church from which they trace their descent, as the *first* and *only* man who ever proposed a *feasible* plan for the uniting of all Protestant Christendom into one harmonious body.

In reviewing the history of the English Church during the six years of Edward's reign, we find great reason to thank God that the chief Reformer of that age was the highest officer in the Church and a leading counsellor in the state, so that neither the fear of persecution, by the civil magistrate, nor of the curses of the priesthood, kept men back from light and religious freedom. We have also reason to thank God that he gave to Cranmer a spirit of moderation, conciliation and prudence in reforming the doctrines and worship of the Church. But chiefly can we thank Him, that no real or supposed necessity urged Cranmer to commit that fatal mistake, which

was committed by every other leading Reformer — the mistake of *forming* a *new* Church, instead of REFORMING the *old* one.

Luther, Calvin, and Knox each *founded* a *new* Church ; Cranmer only purified from its corruptions the *old Church of England*, and left it, after its purification, the *same* Church that he found it, having the same Bishops, ministers and people as before — the same Church into which he himself was baptized, when a child, at whose altars he served as a minister, and for the love of which he afterward cheerfully sacrificed his life in the flames.

CHAPTER VII.

The Church in trouble during the reign of Mary.—Arrests of the Bishops. — Preaching forbidden.—Mary promises submission to Rome. — She begins the persecutions. — Rogers, Hooper, Latimer and Ridley burnt alive. — Cranmer's trial. — His degradation from office. — His recantation. — Is condemned to be burnt. — Takes back his recantation. — Mary's persecutions established the reformation more firmly.

In the reign of Henry VIII., we have seen the English Church aroused to a sense of her true position as an original Apostolic Church, and thereupon casting off the bands which had so long kept her in subjection to Rome. During the short reign of Edward VI., we have seen her sowing the good seed of gospel truth, returning in all things to primitive principles and primitive customs, and clearing away the rubbish of error from her deep and strong foundations. Now, in the reign of Mary, we shall behold her faithful reformers in tears and sufferings, in trials and persecutions, yet still in confident expectation that God would arise for the deliverance of his Church, and cause the seed already sown to bring forth an abundant harvest.

Mary, the sister and successor of Edward VI., was a violent and bigoted Romanist, and, as soon as she came to the throne, she began to carry out the plans which she had long before decided upon. Her intention was to put a stop to the reformation of the Church and bring it back into its former subjection to the authority of the Pope. Had she lived long enough, she might perhaps have accomplished her purpose, but, as she only reigned five years, she was not able, in that short time, to effect anything more than a temporary injury to the cause of reform; and the violent measures which she authorized, really helped to complete the Reformation, by showing to the people at large how much more in accordance with the spirit of the gospel, were the charity and moderation of Cranmer, than the bitterness, bigotry and cruelty of Mary.

Her first step was the arrest and imprisonment of Cranmer. In about two months from Edward's death she imprisoned him, in the Tower of London, on a charge of high treason, but in reality because of his sentiments in regard to religion. As the proceedings against Cranmer were delayed for some time, so that

he did not suffer martyrdom till nearly three years afterward, Mary's course in regard to changes in religion, and her persecution of less prominent personages, will be considered first in order.

The Queen made no secret of her attachment to the Romish doctrines, but, at first, she gave assurances that she would not interfere with the religion of the people, which promises she disregarded as soon almost as they were made. Some of the Romish priests, emboldened by Mary's expressed opinions, ventured to celebrate the mass, and to declaim publicly against the reformations effected during Edward's reign; a popular tumult having arisen in London, on this account, the Queen took advantage of it to forbid *all public preaching*, thus depriving the reformers of their most effective weapon.

She arrested Ridley, Bishop of London, Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, the Archbishop of York, and most of the leading Protestants in the kingdom; she also ordered all the foreign reformers, whom Cranmer had encouraged to settle in England, to depart; and multitudes of the

Protestants who had escaped arrest, and were able to do so, fled to the continent. Owing to the discouragement of the reform party, produced by these measures, when Mary's first Parliament met, a majority were favorable to her, and not a single Bishop of the reforming side was allowed to take a seat.

As soon as the news of Mary's accession reached Rome, the Pope sent Cardinal Pole as his legate to England, and Mary soon after sent a letter in her own handwriting to the Pope, promising to return herself, and bring her kingdom, into obedience to the Papal authority.

But Mary found that she had promised too much. Her first Parliament absolutely refused to revive the laws for the punishment of heretics, and the Queen, finding she could not bring them to terms, dissolved the assembly, and soon after called a new one. When the elections were approaching, orders were sent to the sheriffs to have none elected except those who were of the queen's belief, and when Parliament assembled, there was not probably a single Protestant among its members. Parliament was informed that it was the queen's

wish and expectation that measures should be immediately taken to bring the kingdom into obedience to the Pope. Therefore they readily passed a bill for the punishment of heresy, and several others tending to the same result.

In 1555 the persecutions commenced ; Bishop Hooper and John Rogers, a priest, were put upon trial. Hooper was charged with marrying ; with maintaining that marriages may be legally dissolved for adultery, and that persons so released may marry again ; and with denying Transubstantiation. He admitted the truth of all the charges, and of Transubstantiation he said — "I now affirm that the very natural body of Christ is *not* really and substantially present in the sacrament of the altar ; I assert, moreover, that the mass is idolatrous, and the iniquity of the devil."

Rogers was asked if he would accept the queen's mercy, and be reconciled to the *Catholic** Church. He replied that he "had never departed from that Church, and that he

*It will be seen that these martyrs knew the distinction between the *Catholic* Church, of which the Church of England had always been a branch, and the *Roman* Church over which the Pope presided.

would not purchase the queen's clemency by relapsing into Antichristian doctrines."

Both Rogers and Hooper were condemned to be burnt alive. Rogers was burnt in London on the fourth of February, and Hooper at Gloucester, the principal city of his diocese, on the ninth. A pardon was offered to each, after they were bound to the stake, but each steadily refused it.

After these propitiatory offerings to the offended dignity of the Papal authority, a splendid embassy was sent to Rome to make a formal submission of the kingdom, and to beg forgiveness of the Pope for its late resistance to his authority.

And then the persecutions began again; Bishops Latimer and Ridley were brought for trial before Brookes, the Pope's delegate, who was now Bishop of Gloucester, and similar proceedings were had as in the trials of Hooper and Rogers; both refused to acknowledge the Papal authority, or to deny the doctrines of the reformed Church of England; and both were condemned to be degraded from their office and burnt alive. On the 16th of October they were both burnt, and as the fire

was applied, Latimer addressed his fellow martyr in these words—"Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day, by God's grace, light in England such a candle as I trust shall never be put out."

But the most distinguished Reformer was yet to be tried. Cranmer's associates had all preceded him to martyrdom, and every means was used that could possibly be brought to bear, to destroy him morally before he was committed to the flames.

On September 12th, 1555, he was brought up for trial before Brookes, the Papal delegate, and charged with heresy, perjury, treason and adultery. Cranmer, being called on for his defence, knelt down and repeated the Lord's Prayer; he then rose, and having repeated the Creed, proceeded to deny the authority of the Pope, to inveigh against the practice of saying prayers in the Latin language, and to defend what he had written and taught against Transubstantiation. The next day he was cited to appear in person, before the Pope, within eighty days, and was then sent back to prison. While there he wrote a manly letter to the Queen, wherein he stated his reasons for deny-

ing the Pope's supremacy; which letter was answered by Cardinal Pole, at the instance of the Queen. Pole's reply is worthy of note, because it admits that Cranmer, during his administration, did not cause any one to be put to death for his religious opinions. As soon as the eighty days had elapsed, the Pope condemned him and appointed Cardinal Pole Archbishop of Canterbury, in Cranmer's stead. On February 14th, 1556, Bonner, Bishop of London, and Thirlby, Bishop of Ely, acting as Papal commissioners, proceeded to try Cranmer. The commission was read, dwelling as usual on the Papal impartiality, and stating what ample time had been given to the accused to proceed with his appeal and defence. "My Lord," cried Cranmer, "what lies be these, that I, being continually in prison, and never suffered to have counsel or advocate at home, should procure witness and appoint counsel at Rome. God must needs punish this open and shameless falsehood."

When the commission was read, the various Romish vestments (made of *canvas*, by way of insult), were produced, and he was arrayed in them; a mock mitre was placed on his head,

and a mock crosier in his hand. The brutal Bonner then began to scoff at him. "This is the man," cried he, "that hath despised the Pope, and now is to be judged by him; this is the man that hath pulled down so many churches, and now is come to be judged in a church; this is the man that hath contemned the blessed sacrament, and now is come to be condemned before that sacrament." When they came to strip him of his mock robes of office, as they attempted to take away the *crosier or pastoral staff*, Cranmer held it fast and drew from his sleeve an appeal to the next free, general council.

Cranmer was now degraded from office, and, in order to undo as much as possible the reformation that he had been so active in furthering, all means were used to make him recant and acknowledge that the cause of the Reformation was wrong. He, who had been subjected to such gross injustice and indignity, was now surrounded by persons who treated him with the greatest respect and kindness, and was assured of the kind regard which the Queen had for him, and urged to conciliate her by a recantation. At last he did sign a recantation,

for firmness was not a virtue that he possessed in a high degree, and it was almost the only virtue for which he was not eminent.

But to the eternal disgrace of his persecutors, and happily for the cause of reformation, it was resolved to have Cranmer burnt, notwithstanding his recantation. The sentence was not made known to him till the day of execution. He was taken to St. Mary's Church, where a sermon was preached assigning the reasons why a heretic should be burnt, although he was penitent. He was then called on by the preacher to make a confession of his faith, that all present might know that he had abjured his former opinions ; — "I will do it," said Cranmer, "and that with a good will." He then rose and addressed the people, exhorting them to follow peace and charity ; then he declared his belief in the Creed, and all things taught in the Old and New Testaments ; "And now," said he, "I am come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that I ever said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth ; which here I now renounce and refuse as things written with my hand,

contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and writ for fear of death, and to save my life if might be; and that is all such papers as I have written or signed since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue; and forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand, when I come to the fire, shall first be burned. And as for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine."

He was then cut short in his discourse and hurried to the stake, where he again declared that "he repented his recantation right sore;" and as the flames rose around him he was seen to thrust out his hand into the fire, where it was plainly seen burning some time before the flames reached any other part of his body, and was heard to exclaim with a loud voice, "this hand hath offended."

The reign of Mary now drew near its close; she was suffering from disease, and the conviction that her cruelties had not profited the cause they were designed to build up, together with her domestic troubles, brought her to the grave about twenty months after the execution

of Cranmer.* "With the death of Mary ended forever the dominion of Popery in England. The cruelties perpetrated by her were even of advantage to the reformed faith.

"The English nation is naturally averse to cruelty, and the sight of the constancy, and even exultation, with which the martyrs met their fate, while it caused pity and admiration for the sufferers, inspired a natural favor towards the religion which enabled men to die thus cheerfully, and raised doubts as to the truth of the system which required the aid of the stake and fagot. Hence many who were Romanists at the commencement of Mary's reign, were Protestants at its close; and hence her successor found so little difficulty in establishing the reformed faith.

"The number of those who *perished in the flames* during the four years of persecution, was little short of *three hundred*, of whom more than a sixth were *women*, and some were

* "Of all time since the conquest, her (Mary's) Raigne was the shortest, onely excepting that of Richard the Tyrant, but much more bloudy than was his, and more bloud spilt in that short time of her Raigne than had been shed for case of Christianity in any King's time since Lucius, the first establisher of the Gospel in this Realme."—*Historie of Great Britaine, 2d Edit. by John Speed, London* 1623, p. 1145.

children and even *babes*. There were *five* Bishops and twenty-one of the other clergy among the victims."*

* Keightley's Hist. of Eng. Chap. 8—which is the authority for most of the statements in this chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Church during the reign of Elizabeth.—Romish Bishops removed. — The succession continued. — Fable of the "Nag's Head" ordination.—The consecrations valid.—The Bishops were exiled but not degraded by Mary.—Only *one* Church in England in the first of Elizabeth's reign. — Disputes about trifles. — Want of charity. — Religious and political questions closely connected. — Quarrel about surplices.—Strictness of Elizabeth.—Sign of the cross in Baptism.—Organs.—Church music.—Right of choosing ministers.—Want of presbytery.—The Protestant Episcopal Church grant more than the Puritans asked.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, at the death of Mary, she brought with her a personal popularity such as few rulers have at the beginning of their reign; she had suffered severely from Mary's bigotry and personal jealousy, but had borne herself with such patience and firmness that she had thereby gained many friends; her title to the throne was undisputed, and her personal appearance and manner were very captivating. She was known to be a thorough Protestant in sentiment, but she wished to conciliate all parties by adopting moderate and prudent measures, and taking every suita-

ble means to bring all her subjects to a substantial agreement in matters of religion.

Her first care was to restore all things to the state in which they had been left at the death of Edward VI., but no hasty or violent steps were taken to bring about this result. The first act of Parliament, in her reign, was to restore to the Queen the fullest authority over all persons civil or ecclesiastical, which of course excluded all foreign jurisdiction, and particularly that of the Pope. The use of the Prayer Book was again authorized, and that gave back to the laity the privilege of partaking of both the bread and wine in the Holy Communion, which had been denied in Mary's reign. The queen's injunctions allowed the clergy to marry, under certain restrictions, and a commission was appointed to examine into ecclesiastical matters throughout the kingdom. All persons holding civil offices and all the clergy were required to take an oath to support the queen's supremacy, under penalty of losing their positions. Nearly all the inferror clergy took the required oath without hesitation, and not one in fifty was removed in consequence of refusing to take it. But only *one* of the

Bishops would take the oath (Bishop Kitchin of Llandaff), and the others were all ejected from their dioceses. But they were treated in a very different manner from that in which Mary treated the Bishops who would not come into her views; none of them, not even the brutal and persecuting Bonner, was degraded from office, and they were all allowed quietly to retire to private life and end their days in peace.*

These Bishops having all been appointed in Mary's reign, and being zealous friends of the Romish doctrines, it was very greatly to the advantage of the cause of reformation that they refused to hold their positions when required to take the oath of supremacy; but their removal came near creating another serious difficulty, as there were not Bishops enough left to consecrate those who were appointed to take their places.

But the good providence of God had prepared a way by which this difficulty could be and was overcome, and the Apostolic Succession was preserved, without breaking the line of

* Seabury, p. 85.

descent, in the Church of England, or going outside of it to procure lawful consecrators.

During the persecutions of Mary's reign, several of the Bishops of the reform party, after they had been ejected from their dioceses, fled to Germany and Switzerland, where they remained till the accession of Elizabeth. *Four* of these Bishops, having returned to England, assisted in consecrating Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury, and also in consecrating other Bishops, and thus continued the succession of Bishops in the English Church without any break or foreign interference.

The consecration of Archbishop Parker took place in the chapel of Lambeth Palace, Dec. 17th, 1559. His consecrators were Scory, formerly Bishop of Chichester, Barlow, formerly Bishop of Wells, Coverdale, formerly Bishop of Exeter, and Hodgkin, suffragan Bishop of Bedford.

The authentic documents in regard to this consecration are in existence, and there is no more doubt in regard to the correctness of the facts, than in regard to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. Yet, a story was manufactured by the Romanists, some forty years afterward, to

this effect, that these Bishops elect met at a tavern called the "Nag's Head," and when Oglethorpe, one of the Romish Bishops, refused to consecrate them, Scory laid a Bible on each of their heads, and bade them rise up Bishops. This story is absurd on its face, so much so that Lingard, the Romish historian of England, calls it a fable, and treats it with contempt.*

There is no doubt but all the Bishops consecrated in Elizabeth's reign were solemnly set apart to their office after the prescribed form, because Elizabeth was the last person to have permitted any irregular or clandestine performances; and the only question that can be raised is, whether these Bishops, who returned from exile, had still the right to consecrate other Bishops, if called upon to do so. If

* "The ceremony was performed, though with a little variation, according to the ordinal of Edward VI Two of the consecrators, Barlow and Hodgkin, had been ordained Bishops according to the Roman pontifical, the other two according to the reformed ordinal. Of this consecration, on the 17th of December, there can be no doubt; perhaps in the interval between the refusal of the Catholic prelates and the performance of the ceremony, some meeting may have taken place at Nag's head, which gave rise to the story." —*Lingard's Hist. of Eng., Vol. VII.* p. 293.

The consecration took place in the chapel of the Archbishop's palace at Lambeth, the record was entered in the Archbishop's register, and the original copy is still in the library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge.

they were lawful Bishops themselves they certainly had that right, and it will be very easy to show that they were lawful Bishops.

They were all regularly appointed and consecrated in the reign of Edward VI., and no one pretends that at that time they were not lawful Bishops; in Mary's reign they were driven out of their dioceses, and were obliged to take refuge abroad, but Mary did not have them *degraded* from office nor excommunicated, and therefore they remained in possession of all the spiritual powers which they ever possessed, except that they were driven from the dioceses over which they had presided and not allowed to exercise their office there.

But, having been once entrusted with the powers of a Bishop, that power remained in their hands until it was taken away by the same authority that conferred it — that is, by a formal deposition from the office of a Bishop, pronounced after a regular trial, and by a Bishop or court of Bishops. Cranmer was *deposed* before he was burnt, but these exiled Bishops were never deposed nor even put upon trial, and therefore they were Bishops still when they came back from exile, and were just as

competent to discharge the duties of Bishops as if they had never left the kingdom.

Queen Mary did not take away their *ministerial* authority when she ejected them from their dioceses, for she *could not take away* that which she did not and could not give. She took away their situations and their salaries, for these were under her control, but as she did not *consecrate* nor *make* them Bishops she could not *unmake* them by driving them into exile.

Queen Elizabeth having now filled up the vacant Bishoprics with men of tried integrity and or sound Protestant principles; having restored the Prayer Book and abolished the superstitious practices which Papal influence had introduced into the Church of England; having also set forth the articles of religion and the book of homilies which state and explain the doctrines of the Church as they are now held, we may consider the Church of England as completely reformed, so far as her doctrine and worship were concerned.

No important alteration has been made in either the doctrine or the worship of the Church since the days of Elizabeth — a period of *three*

hundred years — and it must be considered a striking proof of the wisdom of the successive reformers of the English Church that their work has remained unchanged for three centuries, while that of all the continental reformers has been revised and re-modelled by almost every generation that has succeeded them. It is also a fact worthy of especial notice that, at the period of the completion of the reformation of the Church under Elizabeth, there was but *one Church* in the whole of England.*

The Romanist party, having been treated with moderation and kindness, and having doubtless been convinced in a great measure of their previous errors, were satisfied to remain in the English reformed Church and had no separate congregations of their own; and the other parties who have since created so many divisions and so much bitterness and discord, had not then gone to extremes in regard to their opinions on matters of trifling importance.

It would be pleasant to be able to record

* The Romanist party continued in the reformed Church of England and acquiesced in all its measures until the twelfth year of Elizabeth's reign, when the Pope by a bull dated April 27th, 1570, prohibited them from doing so, and thus caused a schism in the Church.

that this harmony had never been disturbed, but all are familiar with the fact that there are now, and for a long time have been, manifold differences and many separate bodies of Christians, each claiming to be the nearest right in doctrine and worship.

In order to contribute something to the restoration of our lost harmony, the succeeding portion of this book will be devoted mainly to setting forth the origin of the several denominations which have separated from the reformed Church of England, with the reasons which moved them to separate. As we learn how small were the differences that separated our fathers, may we learn wisdom for ourselves, and with wisdom, Christian forbearance and charity; — for as we study the causes which conspired to produce the various separations from the Church of England, we may find abundant evidence of the truth of St. Paul's statement, that all spiritual gifts, all insight into the deep mysteries of theology, and all faith in any system of religion, are of less practical value than the single virtue of charity.

As soon as the greatest danger was past, when the power of the Pope was totally nulli-

fied in England, when the doctrines of the Church had been thoroughly purged of all the corruptions that had been borrowed from Rome, and men of piety and learning had been appointed as its chief pastors, when the reformed Church of England was just fairly entering upon the great work of elevating the nation to the standard of the Bible, there arose fierce and bitter disputes about small matters of opinion, which disputes, both by their subject matter and the manner in which they were managed, proved most plainly that, in the reformation, *charity* had not kept pace with faith and zeal and knowledge.

Before proceeding to notice these disputes and their consequences, it is necessary to observe that there are still many things which might be improved in the practical working of the English Church, — that there are many things which her most devoted friends and most pious members would alter if they had the power. But these defects in the working of the English Church are principally caused by its *union with the state*, and are not felt in the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. It should also be noticed that none of those

who at first found fault with and afterward separated from the English Church, ever objected to this union of Church and State, or sought to have it dissolved. On the contrary, as soon as they obtained sufficient power, they made their own the established religion, they connected it with the state just as much as the Church of England ever was, and required all persons to conform to *their* worship and doctrines, under as severe penalties as were ever enacted in behalf of the reformed Church of England.

All the controversies on religious matters, which arose during the reign of Elizabeth and afterward, are so intimately connected with *political* questions, on account of the connection of Church and State, that it is hard to treat of them separately ; yet, as we, in this day and in this country, are no longer concerned about the politics of England in times long past, while we are concerned to know the religious differences of our fathers, since these differences have continued to our day, and have caused us to differ ; therefore, the *political side* of the controversies which are to be noticed will be passed by with as little notice as justice will permit, and

the disputed questions will be presented in their *religious aspect* alone, so far as can be done.

The first subject of dispute between the different parties in the Church, was in regard to the use of the *surplice* and other ecclesiastical dresses. Those of the clergy who had been in exile, during the persecution in Queen Mary's reign, had been accustomed, at Geneva and other places, to many practices very different from those of the Church of England, and, among others, to see ministers officiate in their ordinary dress. They argued that it was sinful to use any dresses which had been used in the Roman Church; the other party maintained that the use of these dresses was a matter of small consequence, and that as it had been the *custom* to use them, and as the *law* required it, no one ought to have any scruple on the subject. It is hardly necessary to show that this latter opinion is the correct one,—that, as there can be no *sin* in wearing a surplice, and as it can be no special evidence of godliness *not* to wear one, so no man ought to disturb the peace and unity of the Church on account of such a trifling matter, but should give up his own opinion on a matter of *taste*, rather

than be the means of causing division and contention on account of it.

Had it not been for the connection between the Church and the State, this dispute would probably have died away; but Queen Elizabeth was very peremptory on this matter and would yield nothing to the scruples of those who objected to the use of the surplice, while they were equally determined not to submit. Elizabeth ordered the Bishops to enforce the law requiring the use of the surplice, and those who refused to use it were accordingly deprived of their preferments. But had the Bishops been permitted to use more lenity they would doubtless have soon overcome the scruples of those who disliked to wear the surplice; and had the latter possessed half as much *charity* as they had *firmness*, they would have yielded their preferences for the sake of Christian harmony.

In connection with the dispute in regard to ecclesiastical dresses, other things of a like indifferent character were objected to. It was complained that the *sign of the cross* used in Baptism was unscriptural, and that the answers of the sponsors were made in the name

of the *child* and not in the name of the sponsors themselves.

The use of *organs* and *Church music* was also a cause of considerable objection to the worship of the Church. All candid and unprejudiced minds will now be ready to admit that it is purely a question of *taste* whether organs and church music shall be used, and indeed there is now but little difference upon this question, between the Episcopal Churches of England and America and those who have separated from them, for other denominations use organs and church music as much as we do. It was not a sufficient reason for *separation* in the first place, and it certainly can be no reason for *remaining separated*, now that both parties think alike upon the subject. In regard to the *sign of the cross* in Baptism, it is now provided that it may be dispensed with, if the sponsors desire it, and if this provision had been made at first,* as it should have been, the result would have been just what it is now in the Church in this country,—not one in a thousand would ever have asked to have it omitted.

*King Charles, in 1660, granted a liberty to dispense with the sign of the cross in Baptism.

It is worthy of note that no objections were made by the puritan party to any of the *doctrines* of the Church of England, and as those doctrines were exactly the same as are now held by the English and the American Episcopal Churches, it would seem to be a natural conclusion that if the descendants of the Puritans hold to the principles of their fathers they can make no objection to the doctrines now taught by these churches

In the matter of *Church government* several things were complained of by the Puritans, some of which were evils resulting from the union of Church and State, which have since been rectified in the American Episcopal Church, and some were principles sanctioned by Scripture and the usages of the primitive Church.

One thing which was strongly opposed was the practice of settling clergymen over parishes *without the consent of the congregation* being asked. This practice still exists to a certain extent in the Church of England, owing to peculiar causes which it would occupy too much space to attempt to explain. It is sufficient to say that it is one of the evils in the government of the English Church which had its

origin at a very early period, and it is so interwoven with the peculiar structure of English society, that it will ever be one of the most difficult things to alter that could be attempted. But when our branch of the Church was organized, this evil was done away; it was provided that every organized congregation should have the right to choose its own minister, which was precisely the thing that the Puritans asked for in Queen Elizabeth's time; could they have enjoyed the liberty which we now give, they would have required no more.

Another matter which was complained of by the Puritans, was the want of a *Presbytery* in the English Church. Those who had been at Geneva, where Calvin had set up a Church without any Bishops, had been accustomed to see the pastors of the different congregations exercising considerable influence in the government of the Church, and they were dissatisfied that they were not permitted to enjoy the same privilege in the English Church. There is abundant evidence that in the days of the Apostles, and in the ages immediately succeeding, the presbyters, and even the *laity* were permitted to share in the government of the

Church, and the Puritans had just reason and scriptural authority for asking that the presbyters should be consulted in the government of the Church. But it did not suit Queen Elizabeth to share her power with those who were more justly entitled to it, nor has it since suited the English government to allow the presbyters of the Church to have any control over matters that so deeply interest them, though they have earnestly and often sought to obtain this concession. In the American Episcopal Church, however, being unfettered by any state alliances, we have returned *more nearly* to the primitive Church than even the Puritans sought to do, and in all our Church assemblies the Bishops, the presbyters, and even the *laity*, have a voice and a vote in the decision of every question. Could the puritan presbyters of Elizabeth's time have lived in our day they would have seen their wishes more than satisfied in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.

But in one point, which these Puritans wished to have altered, there has been no alteration, and it is to be hoped there never will be. They objected to the Bishops as a *third* and

highest *order* in the ministry, asserting, after the example of Calvin, that there were but *two* permanent orders, the Presbyters and Deacons, and that the superiority of Bishops was only a human ordinance and not something established by the Apostles. In this matter also it is more than likely that the connection between Church and State was the real cause of their dissatisfaction with the Bishops, and there is very little question that if the Bishops of the Church of England had been elected by the clergy and laity, as our Bishops are, and had been occupied solely with their proper spiritual duties, as ours are, the Puritans would have submitted to their authority, without a word of remonstrance.

An English Bishop in Queen Elizabeth's time, and even down to our own day, is an anomaly. He is solemnly consecrated for a spiritual work, that is, to ordain and govern the clergy, to oversee and confirm the laity, and to take care that error and corruption are driven away from the Church.

But in the first place the English Bishop is chosen by the *government*, which may select and often has selected its own political favor-

ites without much regard to their fitness for the office. Every unworthy man whom the government puts into the sacred office of a Bishop lowers its estimation in the eyes of the people, who cannot readily distinguish between the *office* and the *man* who holds it. The English Bishop is also a *lord*, who takes rank with the aristocracy; who has a large revenue, and is expected to spend it in maintaining his rank; who has a seat and a vote in the house of lords, and must therefore be constantly occupied, to some extent, in politics, to the neglect of his spiritual duties.

Besides these anomalous duties, in Queen Elizabeth's time and long afterwards the Bishops were compelled, by the government, to be the executors of very many harsh and intolerant laws, which created much bitterness of feeling against *them* that ought rather to have been directed against the government.

The Puritans, having no idea of a Church except as supported by the state, were not able to see that the things which they most disliked about the Bishops were caused by their position as officers of the state, rather than as officers of the Church. They did not

distinguish between the temporal power and the spiritual office of the Bishops, and, because the former was oppressive to them, they denied their right to the latter.

Actuated by the scruples which I have named, and others of like character, a considerable number of the clergy refused to conform to the law enforcing uniformity, and were deprived of their situations. Some of these, in the year 1572, formed themselves into a Presbytery, at Wandsworth, which was the beginning of Presbyterianism in England. Robert Browne, who was the founder of the sect called Brownists, at that time, and afterward Independents, organized his disciples into congregations about the same time. These were the first organizations of those who differed from the Church, and were the starting points of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in England.

Let us now compare the original demands of the puritan party with the present doctrines and practices of the American Episcopal Church, and we shall find but *one* point which they asked for that has not either been granted or is not now regarded as unimportant.

That point was the existence of Bishops as a distinct order. The Puritans supposed there was no scriptural authority for the order of Bishops ; but the Scriptures had not then been thoroughly investigated on this subject, as they have been since. We now ask for no book but the New Testament to prove that the order of Bishops is of divine appointment and was intended to be perpetual Only *one* real point of difference between the founders of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the present day ; and for that one point what a long list of evils have we endured, in the divisions of three hundred years, and how manifold more are we likely to endure in time to come !

CHAPTER IX.

The triumph of the Puritan party. — High views on the divine right of kings. — The Bishops take sides with the king. — Bishops opposed on political grounds. — Puritans ask further concessions — some are granted. — King James' Bible. — Sunday sports permitted. — Inflexibility of Archbishop Laud. — The Long Parliament not a Presbyterian body. — Puritans attempt to destroy the Church, but do not succeed.

THE religious and political histories, of the period of nearly sixty years after the death of Queen Elizabeth, are so intimately connected as to be really inseparable, and, therefore, in order to understand the religious changes which were effected during this period, it will first be necessary to take a view of the state of political opinions in England, at the close of the reign of Elizabeth.

She had reigned about forty-five years, and during this long period the English nation had become thoroughly *Protestant*.

The Church of England, as a reformed and Protestant Church, had taken deep root. Her doctrines were those once delivered to the Saints, her usages primitive and Apostolic, and were entirely satisfactory to the vast majority

of the nation. The word of God was in the hands of the people, and was read, in large portions, on every occasion of public worship; its doctrines were faithfully set forth in the sermons of the clergy, and able works on theology appeared from the pens of the learned.

The result was that men universally began to *think*, education became more general, and freedom of thought and of speech was the order of the day. But when men had learned to think for themselves in religion, they could not be restrained from doing the same in regard to other subjects, and those who had been set free from tyranny in religion were not inclined to submit quietly to tyranny in politics. Men began to study the relative duties of kings and their subjects, and to desire more political freedom than they had heretofore enjoyed. And, as might be supposed, those who had the clearest views of religious liberty, were also those who most wished for civil liberty, and therefore they were mostly religious men who sought to promote political reform.

After the death of Elizabeth, her successor, James I., adopted a line of policy every way calculated to excite the fears, the jealousy, and

the determined opposition of all those who wished for constitutional government and political freedom. He held very high views in regard to the divine right of kings ; he maintained that all power was vested in them by express grant from God, and that the people had no right to question the wisdom or justice of their acts. He wished to be an absolute monarch, and strove to evade all those checks upon kingly power, which the English constitution had placed in the hands of Parliament.

His successor, Charles I., though his private character was far superior to that of James, adopted the same public policy, and held the same views in regard to his kingly prerogative.

The mass of educated and influential men in the nation had now adopted opinions on these subjects contrary to those held by James and Charles. They held that the king was bound to govern according to established law, and not according to his own will and pleasure ; that the king had no right to make laws nor to alter them, as the power to do this was vested in the Parliament ; and especially that he had no right to levy taxes without the express permission of Parliament.

Thus there were two parties in the state; on the one side was the king and a small minority of the nation, claiming, for the sovereign, absolute power; on the other side was the majority of the people, striving to limit that power within the bounds of law.

The question, it will readily be seen, was purely a political one; let us now see how it came to pass that the Church was dragged into it, and it will be found that in this case, as in nearly every other, the connection of the Church with the state was the real source of all the evil that befel her.

In the first place, the Bishops were all appointed by the Crown, and, of course, only such as coincided with the views of the king were placed in that high station. Therefore the mere fact that all the chief officers of the Church were of the king's party in politics, created a prejudice against the Bishops in the eyes of their political opponents. Again, the Bishops, as members of Parliament, used their votes in support of the king's measures, which still further excited the anger of those who opposed those measures; — and, worse than all, several of the Bishops held honorable and

lucrative offices in the government, which was plainly incompatible with the proper discharge of their spiritual duties. Archbishop Laud, for example, was for a long time the Prime Minister of Charles I.

Thus the Bishops came to be regarded as the main supporters of the king; they were completely identified with his political party, and whatever odium rested on the king for his arbitrary and unlawful acts, rested equally on the Bishops, as his advisers and supporters.

In a similar way, all the clergy were brought under the same odium; for when Charles I. was unable to obtain a grant of money from his Parliament, in the regular and lawful manner, he had recourse to a most unjust and illegal mode of getting it, namely, by compelling the people to loan it to him. In order to accomplish his object, the Bishops were directed to order their clergy to preach upon the lawfulness of this mode of obtaining money, and to assert the divine right of the king to do as he saw fit. Many of the clergy demurred, and did not obey this order, and thus, to some extent, the clergy took sides against their Bishops.

It would be unprofitable, as it is unnecessary,

to give in detail the various arbitrary acts of the king, and the ways in which the clergy were made to share in the odium attached to these acts, since they were all of a like character, being the offspring of a determination, on the part of the sovereign, to get rid of all checks upon his authority.

It was the misfortune of the Church, that the appointment of her Bishops and chief dignitaries was in the hands of the king, and that he was thus enabled to use the influence of the Bishops, and of many of the clergy, against the liberties of the people ; and the fact of the Bishops' consenting to be so used, raised up, against their order, the hostility of all who sought to maintain their political freedom, even though they belonged to and loved the Church. They were willing to submit to the authority of the Bishops, as officers of the *Church*, but when the Bishops acted as officers of the *State*, and, as such, labored to make the government arbitrary and unconstitutional, they were constrained to oppose them.

If there had been any way in which to oppose the temporal power of the Bishops, without at the same time attacking their spiritual author-

ity, the majority of their opponents would have done this ; but, as it was, they saw that the whole body of Bishops were in the way of their liberties, and thus a powerful party was formed, whose watchword was "down with Episcopacy."

Having now sketched the causes which gave rise to a large party opposed to the Bishops on *political* grounds, it will next be shown how a smaller party arose who were opposed to them in *religious* matters, and who assumed the name of Puritans.

The Puritan party originated, as was shown in the last chapter, in the reign of Elizabeth, and consisted of those who objected to certain ceremonies used in the Church service, and to certain defects in the discipline of the Church.

When James I. came to the throne, the Puritans had great hopes of obtaining from him such alterations in the Church service and discipline, as would render both more acceptable to them. They accordingly presented to him a petition, numerously signed, requesting that certain alterations might be made. Upon the receipt of this petition he appointed a conference to take place, in his presence,

between the leading puritan divines and a selected number of the Bishops.

The objections presented by the Puritans were of the same character with those which they urged in the reign of Elizabeth, but considerably more numerous. In doctrine, they objected to the article on Predestination, wishing to have it framed more strongly in favor of that doctrine, and proposed a few unimportant changes in the wording of other articles. They also repeated the objections formerly urged against the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross in Baptism, the ring in marriage, and some other unimportant matters. They also requested that a new translation of the Bible might be made, in which request the Bishops also joined, and King James' version, or our present English Bible, is the result of that conference.

But few of the alterations asked for by the Puritans, at this conference, were made, the others being regarded by the king as trifling and unnecessary. The Puritans seem, however, to have been partially satisfied with these concessions, and, by the occasional license given to over-scrupulous clergymen to omit the use of

the surplice ; but then a new question arose in regard to observing the Lord's Day, which gave additional strength to the puritan party.

During the period in which the Church of England was in subjection to the Papal rule, much laxity had prevailed in regard to the observance of the Lord's Day ; but as the principles of religion became better understood, the more religious people began to be more strict in the observance of the day, and many went to great extremes in their strictness. It had been customary for the poorer classes to have various amusements on Sunday afternoon, which gave great offence to those who desired to have the day strictly observed, and they petitioned to have these games forbidden.

At this the Court took offence, and the king issued a proclamation authorizing the Sunday sports, and commanding that they should not be interfered with ; and the clergy were directed to read this proclamation in their churches. A few complied, others read only a part of it, and many refused to read it at all. Those who refused were punished with more or less severity, according to the views of the different Bishops ; but the whole proceeding, being

advised, as was supposed, by Laud, who was both Archbishop and Prime Minister, created great prejudice against *him*, and indirectly against the Bishops and the Church, and so turned many of the more religious to the puritan party.

Archbishop Laud was also guilty of another piece of folly, which added still more to the strength of the Puritans. As has been stated, they were over-scrupulous about certain ceremonies, and magnified them into matters of serious importance ; Laud did the same thing, but in the opposite direction. They desired *fewer* ceremonies, and he commanded *more* to be observed than the Prayer Book authorized, and thus when there was need of moderate and conciliatory measures, he adopted extreme ones, and enforced them with severity, which diverted still more to the puritan party.

Such was the origin and such were the views of the puritan party. Their leading aim was to check the arbitrary power of the Sovereign, which was purely a political measure, and one for which the friends of the Church were as anxious as its enemies. Their secondary object was to deprive the Bishops of their political

influence, because that influence was on the side of the king ; and there was a very small fraction of the party who wished to overturn the Church and set up a Presbytery on its ruins.

Yet strange as it may seem, the Long Parliament which took up arms against Charles I.; which conquered and beheaded him ; which deprived the Bishops of their votes, and beheaded Archbishop Laud ; which drove out Episcopacy for the time being, and established Presbyterianism ; which condemned the Prayer Book as a popish work, and forbade its use in public or in private — this very Puritan Parliament had at first only *one* man in it who was a *Presbyterian.* So entirely was the puritan party a *political* one, that all the members of that noted parliament, except one, were Episcopalians ; and it is a melancholy example of the blindness of party zeal, that in their eager haste to obtain political advantages, they were willing to combine against the Church which they regarded as the purest and best in existence, and for whose sake, if they had lived in Queen Mary's reign, many of them would doubtless have been willing to shed their blood.

It would be out of place here to do more than to state the results of the action of this parliament. They did their best to destroy the reformed Church of England, and, if laws or *human instrumentalities* could have accomplished such a result, they would have utterly rooted up the Church. They removed the Bishops from their sees, and forbade them, under heavy penalties, to exercise their offices in any way. They ejected all the clergy from their parishes except those who would take an oath to endeavor to root out popery and *prelacy*. They forbade the use of the Prayer Book even in a *private family*, still more in a public assembly, under penalty of fines and imprisonment; and they used all efforts to root out from remembrance every thing connected with the Church's worship and discipline.

Yet the Church of England was not destroyed: her Bishops and priests waited with patience for the storm of fanaticism to pass over, and when the clear sky again appeared, the Church, chastened by affliction and taught by sad experience, entered again upon her rightful heritage.

CHAPTER X.

The results of Puritan dominion. — The clergy ejected. — Use of the Prayer Book prohibited. — Organs and surplices forbidden. — Violence of fanaticism. — Sects multiply. — The ministry usurped by ignorant enthusiasts. — Various sects permanently organized. — The evils of division fastened on the generations to come. — The reaction from Puritan strictness to great laxity, and then to coldness and formalism. — First intentions and efforts of the Wesleys. — Peculiarities of Mr. Wesley's discipline. — The first Methodists were all members of the Church of England. — Wesley's advice to the Methodists, not to separate from the English Church. — How the American Methodists came to separate.

The period of nearly twenty years, during which the Church of England was proscribed by those who held the reins of power, is one of the deepest interest. It is a period the history of which few persons can read without having their feelings and prejudices deeply enlisted on the side of one or the other of the great political and religious parties ; for the reason that the parties then formed have come down with slight variations to our own times, and nearly every reader now belongs to some party which had its origin in those eventful and exciting days.

When the clergy of the Church of England were prohibited from discharging the duties of their office, and severe penalties were enforced upon all who should make use of the Prayer Book, the Puritans, being left at full liberty to carry out their own views in religious matters, entered with great ardor upon the work of reforming the nation according to their standard.

They everywhere substituted extemporaneous prayers for the devotions of the Prayer Book ; they destroyed the organs in many of the churches and forbade their use in all ; they banished the surplice and other ecclesiastical dresses, calling them "rags of popery," and removed all ornaments from the churches ; in short, they exterminated, as far as possible, all the ceremonies and usages which had been practiced in the Church of England, and made everything as different as they could.

The feelings of all parties were kept up to a point of unnatural excitement by the stirring events of the times, and controversies upon the smallest matters were carried on with a violence and a bitterness which did no credit to religion.

It was at this time that the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists and the Quakers became

fully organized, in England, in their present form, although the two former had their first beginnings in England seventy years before. There was no particular form of Church government established by law, but most of those who occupied the prominent pulpits were either Presbyterians or Congregationalists.

Numerous smaller sects arose, following the extravagant notions of this or that preacher, some of which have continued down to the present day, but most of them died in the age that produced them. It was a time admirably adapted to the growth of all kinds of fanatical extravagancies, for men's minds were unsettled on religion, in consequence of the great changes which had taken place; and, as any man preached, who chose to do so, every facility was given for the promulgation of all sorts of opinions.

Only a small portion of the puritan preachers seem to have been regularly ordained by any body, but each man who thought himself called to preach set himself up for a minister, and asked no authority from any one. Thus in the army nearly all the officers, and many of the private soldiers, were in the habit of preaching

frequently, while, throughout the country, ignorant men of various trades and callings wrought at their work on week days, and expounded the Scriptures on Sundays.

Two evils resulted from this state of things, which are still felt among us at the present day. One was the lowering of the estimate put upon the ministerial office, since the most ignorant men made themselves ministers ; and the other was the slight regard paid to the ancient and regular rules for the calling, ordination and discipline of the ministry, without which rules, experience has proved that no efficient ministry can be kept up for any length of time.

But, while the Puritans were so very lax in requiring uniformity of doctrine or of Church organization, they were very strict in enforcing the outward appearance of morality. Various amusements were forbidden, great plainness of dress was inculcated, and an unnatural air of gravity and seriousness pervaded the land, which was very distasteful to those who were not of the puritan party.

This party continued in power, as a religious and political combination, for about twenty

years, being directed in all its movements, during the latter half of that time, by the energy and talents of Oliver Cromwell; but after his death the civil government was restored to its former condition, the political power of the puritan party was broken, and the Church of England was restored to the position which it had previously occupied during the reign of Elizabeth.

During the twenty years of puritan rule, the numbers of the Puritans had greatly increased, and a generation that had grown up during that period, had been educated in their principles, ignorant of and prejudiced against the worship and discipline of the Church of England. When, therefore, the Church was re-established on its former basis, as the National Church, instead of the few scattering individuals who in the days of Elizabeth were too scrupulous to wear a surplice or listen to an organ, there was now a large minority of the nation who went by the name of Puritans, and were more or less opposed to the Church.

These persons continued to use the worship and discipline to which they had been accustomed for the preceding twenty years, and thus

numerous congregations of Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists and various smaller sects were permanently established in all parts of the country. From that period to the present this state of things has been perpetuated in England and wherever the English language is used.

The Puritans at first were only a few over-scrupulous and over-zealous men, who were offended because their ideas on the subject of discipline and ritual were not adopted; afterward their numbers were largely increased by the addition of those who opposed the Bishops, on political grounds; and finally they gained sufficient power to change the form of government, and drive out, for a time, the Church from its old position as the National Church.

After having their own way for twenty years, they became too firmly settled in their attachment to their own peculiarities, too strongly confirmed in their prejudices, and too much imbued with the bitter hostility of party spirit, to have any desire for union with the Church of England. Therefore they stood aloof from the Church after her re-establishment; they

formed congregations of their own, trained up their children in their views, and thus succeeded in making many millions of men, at the present day, stand as continual adversaries to each other, on account of a *trifling quarrel* about *organs*, and *surplices* and *crosses* which began three hundred years ago, and which not one in a thousand of those who oppose each other at the present day ever heard about.

Since the political downfall of the Puritans and the restoration of the Church of England there has been but one other considerable secession from her communion — that of the Methodists — whose history will now be briefly considered.

During the short rule of the Puritans they were very rigid in enforcing strictness and seriousness of manners, carrying their views on these points to an extreme that was very distasteful to the majority of the nation ; so much so that all who were not of the puritan party looked upon the religion of that party as one that cut off its votaries from all the natural pleasures of the senses and of social intercourse, and cordially hated it for its gloominess and austerity.

As soon therefore as the Puritans lost their political ascendency, and the severe laws which they had enacted were repealed, the people, like children released from long confinement in school, broke forth into all manner of extravagancies, and, having the example of a corrupt and licentious king to encourage their excesses, the morals of the nation soon became much worse than at any period since the Reformation. After a short period of wicked licence there came a much longer period of spiritual coldness and formality, during which time there was a serious lack of faithfulness among the clergy, and among the laity there was a general disposition to be satisfied with the form of godliness without its power.

The object of the founders of Methodism was to overcome this religious apathy and to awaken the members of the Church of England to greater earnestness and spirituality in their religion.

The original founders of Methodism were John and Charles Wesley, both of them being ministers of the Church of England and members of the University of Oxford. It was while residing at Oxford that they began their

efforts to improve the spiritual condition of their neighbors, and they continued these efforts with considerable success for several years.

In the year 1738, John Wesley began preaching in London wherever an opportunity was afforded him, sometimes in churches and sometimes in other places, and, a considerable number of persons being brought to embrace his views, he formed them into a society, made rules for their observance and obtained a building in which he regularly met with and instructed them. After this he visited other places, as did also his brother Charles, and they preached in the fields, in the streets or wherever they could obtain an audience.

Such was their success that societies similar to the one in London were organized wherever they preached, and the number of the Methodists increased astonishingly. As they increased in number and new opportunities for preaching presented themselves, Mr. Wesley accepted the offers of serious and devout laymen to preach, under his direction, and, after satisfying himself in regard to their qualifications, he sent them to labor where he supposed they could be most useful.

He also appointed stewards to attend to the money contributed by the societies, and to see to all business matters. Thus there grew up a large number of societies with a multitude of preachers and with considerable pecuniary ability. Their numbers still continuing to increase, chapels were built for their accommodation, a school was founded for the training of their preachers, and the machinery of their government was improved till it resulted in a system of great regularity and efficiency.

The most striking peculiarity of the system was the absolute and unlimited control which Mr. Wesley exercised over all the societies and preachers. The first members of the Methodist societies were persons who had been converted under the preaching of Mr. Wesley and his brother, and for these societies he framed a set of rules, which all who became members bound themselves to observe. As the societies increased, Mr. Wesley adapted his first rules to any new exigencies that might arise, still retaining for himself a general supervision over all the societies.

When there were more than 50,000 members in his societies, and they were scattered over

all England and Ireland, Mr. Wesley still retained the same authority over them which he exercised when there was but one society under his own immediate care; he still made and altered their rules as he saw fit, allowing no person to direct him. All the stewards were appointed by him, were directed by him how to apply the money which they received, and were removed by him at pleasure. All the preachers also were examined and licensed by him, and each year he appointed the itinerant preachers to their several stations. Whenever a member or a preacher refused to submit to Mr. Wesley's directions, he simply ceased to be a member of the Methodist society.

And as the organization and discipline of the Methodist societies were essentially different from any of the organizations established by the Puritans, so was the object aimed at by Mr. Wesley and his fellow laborers entirely different from anything attempted by the Puritans. The aim of the Puritans was to *overthrow* the Church of England and set up a Presbyterian, or Congregational, or Quaker organization in place of it; the aim of the Wesleys was to *revive* and *invigorate* the

Church of England by promoting holiness among its members and by gathering into it the outcasts and the neglected whom they found in the fields and in the streets.

No fact is plainer, to any one who examines Mr. Wesley's writings, than that he was most warmly and sincerely attached to the Church of England, of which Church he was a regularly ordained minister and continued such till his death. From the first it was one of his established rules that no preacher should preach during the hours of service in the neighboring Church, but either before or after service. It was also a standing regulation that all the members of his societies, preachers as well as private members, should attend the regular services of the Church of England, should receive the Holy Communion in the parish church, and should have their children baptized by the clergy of the English Church.

Mr. Wesley did not allow his preachers to baptize nor to administer the Communion, and was particular to have them called *preachers* or *helpers* and not *ministers*. He would not allow his societies to be called *churches*, and

until the day of his death he warned and entreated the Methodists not to leave the Church of England.

In the year 1789, about a year and a half before Mr. Wesley's death, he wrote as follows: "When the people, joined together simply to help each other to heaven, increased by hundreds and thousands, they had no more thought of leaving the Church than of leaving the kingdom. Nay, I continually and earnestly cautioned them against it; reminding them that we were a part of the Church of England, whom God had raised up not only to save our own souls, but also to enliven our neighbors, *those of the Church in particular*. I never had any design of separating from the Church; I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do, and will do all in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all I can do, many of them will separate from it (although I am apt to think not one-half, perhaps not a third of them). These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party, which consequently will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party. In flat

opposition to these, I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it."

Mr. Wesley's prediction that the Methodists would separate from the Church of England was soon fulfilled, and he was one of the agents in producing the separation, although he did not intend to produce any such result. In the year 1784, Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke (who was a regularly ordained presbyter of the Church of England) and Mr. Francis Asbury (who was a layman) to be joint Superintendents over the Methodists in America. The following is a quotation from the testimonial letter addressed by Mr. Wesley "to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America," and which these two gentlemen brought with them when they came to their new jurisdiction.

Mr. Wesley says — "I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke, and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as Elders among them by baptizing and administering the Lord's

Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy,* little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted National Church in the world) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the Elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's day."

Mr. Wesley seems to have acted in this matter at the request of others, as the whole proceeding was contrary to his former principles, and its direct tendency was to cause a *new Church* to be set up by the Methodists, instead of remaining members of the Church of England, as they had been from the first beginning of Methodism. Therefore, as soon as Dr. Coke met the Conference of Methodists at Baltimore, he opened his commission from Mr. Wesley, proceeded to have Mr. Asbury ordained a Superintendent,† taking the same

* The writer has seen an original copy of the Liturgy which Mr. Wesley prepared for the use of the American Methodists.

† The following account is taken from "A Short History of the Methodists," by Jesse Lee, who was one of the early

title also himself, and the Methodist societies then took the name of the "Methodist Episcopal Church;" and have since that time been

Methodist preachers, and whose work is mostly taken from the minutes of the Conferences. It was published at Baltimore in 1810.

"December 27th, 1784.—The thirteenth conference began at Baltimore, which was considered to be a general conference, in which *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* presided. At this conference we formed ourselves into a regular Church, by the name of the *Methodist Episcopal Church;* making at the same time the Episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent amenable to the body of ministers and preachers.

"Mr. *Asbury* was appointed a *superintendent* by Mr. *Wesley*, yet he would not submit to be ordained, unless he could be voted in by the conference; when it was put to vote, he was unanimously chosen. He was then ordained *Deacon*, then *Elder*, and afterwards *Superintendent*, before the end of the conference."—p. 94.

The third question on the minutes, as given by this author, is in part thus—

"What plan of church government shall we hereafter pursue?" Answer.—"We will form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of superintendents, elders, deacons and helpers." * * * —p. 96.

Mr. Lee, on pages 127 and 128, says—"In the course of this year (1787) Mr. Asbury reprinted the general minutes; but in a different form from what they were before. * * * The third question in the second section, and the answer, read thus: 'Q.—Is there any other business to be done in conference? A.—The electing and ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.' This was the first time that our Superintendents ever gave themselves the title of Bishops, in the minutes They changed the title *themselves*, without the consent of the conference; and at the next conference they asked the preachers if the word *Bishop* might stand in the minutes; seeing that it was a Scripture name, and the

a distinct body, having no connection with the Church of England. After Mr. Wesley's death a portion of the English Methodists did the same thing, while only a few remained in the communion of the Church of England.

This was the last of the separations from the Church of England, and the last of the *new Churches* formed by withdrawing from her communion. In the next chapter we shall see how very differently the Protestant Episcopal Church was organized.

meaning of the word *Bishop* was the same with that of *Superintendent.*

"Some of the preachers opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word *Bishop* remain." * * * "From that time the name of Bishop has been in common use among us, both in conversation and in writing."

CHAPTER XI.

Organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church. — Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. — Opposition of the Puritans to the appointment of American Bishops. — Difficulties under which the Church in the colonies labored. — Troubles about obtaining Bishops after the Revolution. — Complete organization of the NEW NATIONAL CHURCH. — The *right to separate* was the puritan principle. — Various divisions that have grown out of it. — Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists all have divided and subdivided since their separation from the Church of England. — The Church of England never divided. — The Protestant Episcopal Church has continued *one* Church and *must* so continue as long as she exists.

WHEN the American Colonies were settled, the colonists were not all Puritans, nor were a majority of them of that party. In North and South Carolina and in Virginia nearly all the settlers professed allegiance to the Church of England, and their clergy were nearly all of that Church; in the New England colonies there were but few clergy or members of the English Church; but in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware a considerable portion of the people and clergy were members of the Church of England.

As in all new countries, they met with many difficulties in establishing and maintaining their worship; the sparseness of the population, the poverty of the people, and the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of qualified ministers to take charge of parishes where the labor was great and the pay small, all conspired to make the growth of the congregations of the Church of England among the colonists slow and uncertain.

And it would have been still slower had it not been for the assistance rendered to them by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts." This, the oldest of all Protestant missionary societies, was founded in the year 1701; its object was to assist the colonists who were members of the Church of England, and who were unable to procure or support clergymen. The society collected funds in England, and procured clergymen who were willing to emigrate, and, after their arrival in this country, paid part or the whole of their salary until the congregation became strong enough to do without its aid. Many of the leading congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church at the present day were in

their infancy nourished and aided by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

The congregations of the members of the Church of England in the colonies had many difficulties to contend with besides those that were incident to all new countries; and the wonder is, not that they did not increase faster, but that they could increase at all.

In the first place they could not be organized as a complete Church, because they had no Bishops. The Puritans, in this country and in England, used every exertion to prevent the consecration of Bishops for the colonies; the English government did not incline to appoint Bishops, partly from indifference and partly for fear it would render the Church in the colonies independent of the mother Church; and the English Bishops, for some reason or other, showed no great inclination to move in the matter. Therefore though the members of the Church in the colonies urged and entreated that Bishops might be appointed over them, it was never done till after the Revolution.

Having no Bishops, there was no authority to keep the clergy in order, except the Bishop

of London, and he was so far away that his authority did not amount to much; so the clergy did as they pleased, and ministers who were too incompetent or too unworthy to be retained in any decent position at home, emigrated to this country and became a continual damage and annoyance to the feeble congregations upon which they imposed themselves. The Churches had no representative assemblies in which they could meet for mutual conference or to devise measures to promote their common interests; but were simply isolated congregations with no common centre and no bond of union except that created by having the same worship and like principles.

To these disadvantages was added a still more serious one, namely, that there was no opportunity for receiving the rite of Confirmation, nor for having any native clergy ordained except by making a dangerous and expensive voyage across the Atlantic for the purpose.

But notwithstanding these disadvantages, the churches did increase until the difficulties arose which caused the American Revolution and terminated in the independence of the United States. At the breaking out of the

war of independence, although Washington and the principal leaders of the revolutionary movement were members of the Church of England, yet the majority of the clergy, having taken the *oath of allegiance to the king*, at their ordination, did not feel at liberty to break that oath, and they either discontinued their ministrations or left the country. Only a small proportion continued their regular services and took sides against the king's authority, and the rest were considered as belonging to the royalist party, whether they were royalists or not.

When therefore the Revolution was ended, the churches were left in a worse condition than ever before. Many of them had no ministers ; all of them rested under the imputation of being unfriendly to the principles of the Revolution, and so had to struggle against the deepest hostility of popular prejudice ; they had now no Bishops to govern, confirm or ordain them, and, according to their principles, they could not organize as a complete Church, until this difficulty was removed.

But they set earnestly to work ; they succeeded in getting together a convention of

delegates from the churches in the different states ; they framed canons for their temporary government, and they made an urgent appeal to the English Bishops to consecrate Bishops for them. After much delay, their request was finally granted, and William White of Pennsylvania, Samuel Provoost of New York, and James Madison of Virginia (all of them Presbyters of the Church of England and citizens of the United States), were consecrated by the English Bishops as Bishops for the American Church. And previous to their consecration, Samuel Seabury, of Connecticut, was consecrated a Bishop by three of the Scottish Bishops.

Having, in three years after the conclusion of the Revolutionary war, obtained four duly consecrated Bishops, with the *full consent and approbation* of the authorities of the mother Church of England, and with their *assistance* as consecrators of the Bishops, these who had hitherto been members and ministers of the Church of ENGLAND, now organized themselves as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of AMERICA, changing no one of their principles, altering none of their

doctrines, and cutting themselves off from no Church.

The Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, and various minor sects *separated* from the communion of the Church of England, and *cut themselves off* from *all connection* with her; and the proof that this is so is found in the fact that never since the day of their separation have any of them had any fraternal intercourse with the Church of England. But the American Episcopal Church did never *cut herself off* from the Church of England, nor did the English Church ever cut her off; so that they are still ONE COMMUNION, though *independent* of each other's control; and the proof that this is so is found in the fact that any clergyman of the Church of England may preach in any parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and any clergyman of the American Episcopal Church may preach in any parish Church in England.

Since the day that the Church of England was planted, and that is certainly more than sixteen hundred years, there has never been a *division* in her communion; no *new* Episcopal Church has ever been formed by her

children ; but she has stood, through evil days and good ones, through the rise and fall of empires, through all the changes of dynasties, under every form of government, from the Roman Emperor, to the Republican President and the Constitutional Queen, *one and undivided.*

History is said to be "Philosophy teaching by Example ;" and what a lesson do the various separations from the Church of England teach us in regard to the danger of breaking the unity of the Church on account of minor differences. The Baptists separated from the Church of England on account of their difference on *one* point ; the result is that they are now divided into not less than *eight* distinct denominations, some of which have very far departed from orthodoxy, and all are widely at variance with *each other.* The Quakers have also divided since they left the Church of England, and a part of them are considered by the other portion as holding dangerous and heretical doctrines. The Presbyterians, when they left the Church of England, differed from it in no matter of doctrine, and in but one point of real importance in the matter of

Church government; they are now divided into *four* distinct ecclesiastical bodies, having but little sympathy with each other, to say the least of it. The Congregationalists have seen a portion of their ministers and congregations turn to be Unitarians, and some of these again to be Universalists; proving that their chosen plan of Church government could neither prevent divisions nor even hold fast the orthodox faith. And lastly, the Methodists, during a separate existence of only about seventy years, have, by dividing into *four* denominations in this country and several more in England, proved that the strongest bands of discipline cannot prevent division when the right to separate for trifling causes has once been assumed as a principle.

And the reason for this multiplication of sects is plain. The Puritans separated from the Church of England, *not* on account of any *wrong doctrine* which they believed her to maintain, but because they were not satisfied with certain small matters in her worship and discipline. Thus they practically established this as one of their tenets, that whenever any number of persons are dissatisfied with any

thing in the doctrine or the practical working of the Church, they are justified in leaving its communion and forming a new Church for themselves.

They established this tenet by the strong argument of their own example; and the inevitable consequence was, that when some of their *own body* became dissatisfied with certain doctrines and certain practices insisted on by *these very Puritans*, they followed the example of their fathers, separated from *their* communion, and set up a new sect after their own notion, just as the Puritans separated from the Church of England and made new Churches to suit themselves.

If the Puritans maintained that it was right for them to separate from the Church of England on account of trifling differences, they could not maintain that it was wrong for their descendants to separate from them on account of still greater differences.

Thus, the principle being once established, they could not limit its application, and the separating process seems likely to continue going on until there shall either be no sect large enough to divide again, or till men shall

be convinced that the *principle* on which the Puritans and all other separatists have acted is *entirely wrong*, and shall earnestly set themselves to counteract the evil consequences which the conduct of the Puritans has entailed on the generations that have followed them.

But the Church of England has been *at unity in herself* and has continued *undivided* since the day of her foundation; and the American Episcopal Church is *one* with the Church of England, standing in the relation of the daughter to the mother, alike in faith, alike in organization. In this united communion there *has never been* such a thing as division, and that fact is the best guarantee that no such thing *ever will be.*

Do we seek a basis for the reunion of all those who hold the essential truths of the Gospel? Where shall we find it except in this communion? Can any other denomination of Christians give us any assurance that it will not be again torn asunder by new divisions, as we have seen that they have all been divided before?

The wise man hath said, "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that

which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." The communion of the English Church has remained one and undivided since the days of the Apostles, while all the others have been rent in twain again and again.

There is yet another reason why the members of this communion consider this the only practical basis for the reunion of all orthodox Christians, and why they are unwilling to stand upon any other. This reason is that we can trace back our origin as an *organized Church* almost, if not quite, to the days of the Apostles, while every other denomination is, as history shows us, of comparatively recent origin; none of them being much over three hundred years old, and some of them having been organized as churches within the memory of men who are now living.

There is no Protestant Church but this which the Romanist may not taunt with having received the Gospel through the Church of Rome. The English is as old as the Roman Church, and had the Gospel in its purity long before the corruption and tyranny of the Pope were exercised or known in England.

Can any show a better basis for union than is here presented? A Church founded in the days of Apostles — a Church which believes no more nor less than the faith which Apostles taught — a Church which has continued undivided since the days of its foundation — a Church which allows to its members the largest freedom of thought and action consistent with Christianity. If a better basis for union than this can be found, the writer, for one, is ready to take his stand upon it.

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